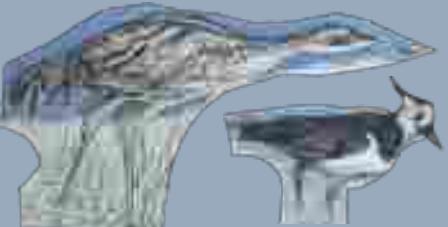


# Origins



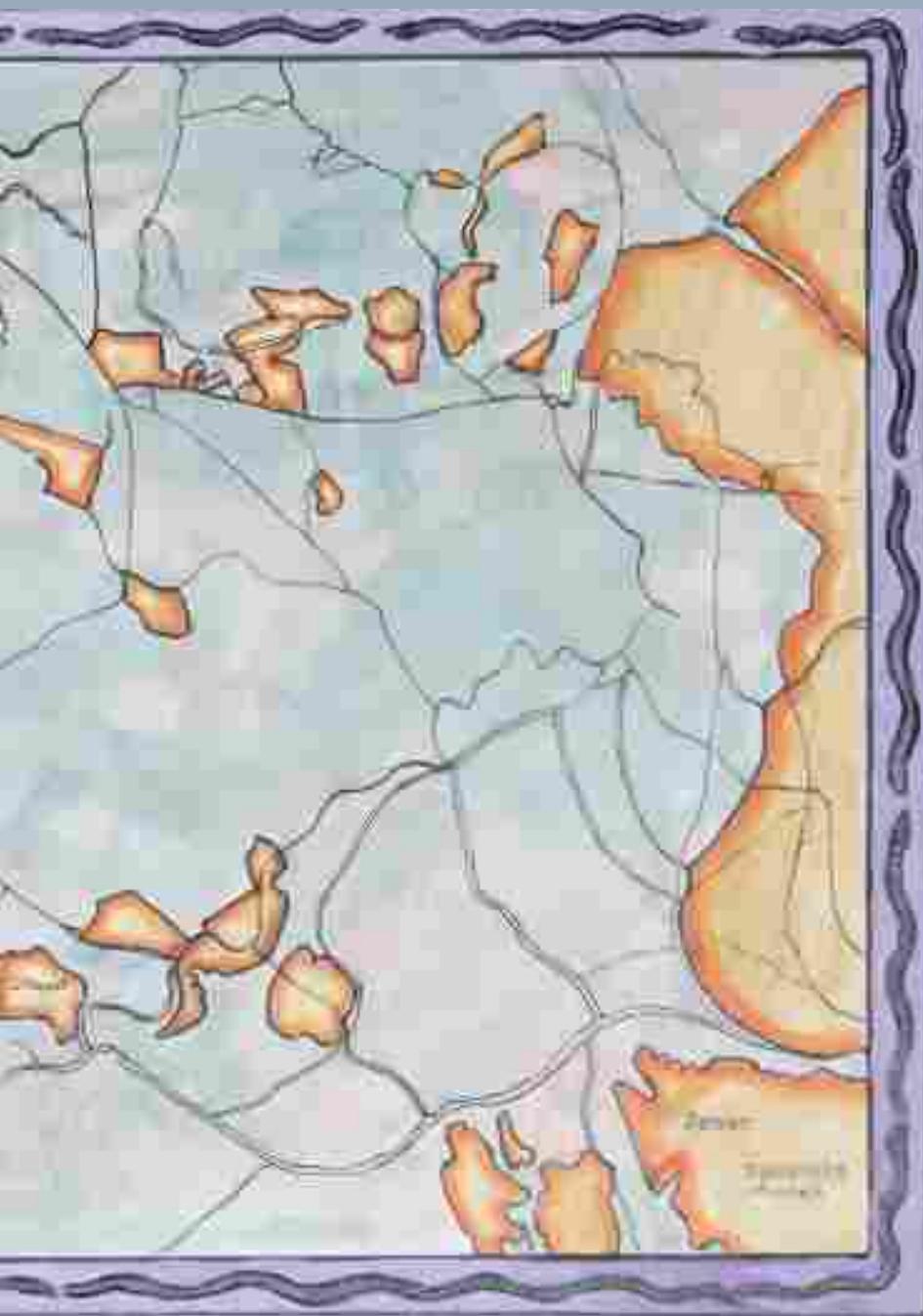
*The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes;  
the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens*

by The Word Garden



*Fen Islands  
Before the  
Drains Came*





First published 2019

Origins

The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes;  
the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens  
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# Origins

*The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes;  
the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens*

2019



# Introduction and Background

**to *The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes; the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens* by The Word Garden, a not-for-profit community group working in the East Anglia region**

We're delighted to support The Word Garden in this intriguing project. Thanks to National Lottery players, young people and the local community can play a part in discovering more about this untold story and learning about the part played in shaping the Fenland landscape.

– Robyn Llewellyn, Head of National Lottery Heritage Fund, East of England

Building on its track record of successful community engagement, The Word Garden project team worked in partnership with the following: Jean Rees-Lyons, originator and author; Peter Daldorph, consultant environmentalist and writer; Adam Giles, film-maker; Helena g Anderson, photographer; Virginie Ganivet, film soundtrack and vocals; Nicola Power, evaluator; Mike Petty, historian; supported by a team of Durham University archaeologists and specialists in the field. The project was managed by Florence Tong, Head of Project Delivery at Babylon ARTS.

Adopting a tried and tested methodology we brought together archaeological investigations, archival and scientific research, primary and secondary research and human interest stories. The outcomes reimagine, retell and record new legacy materials.

Our guiding interdisciplinary approach, adapting primary and secondary sources including rare historic documents and records, maps and other visual images, personal accounts and folk tales, underpinned by historical, archival and scientific research, remains an integral part in the how-to of our project work.

The achievements, benefits and outcomes of this approach are shown in our *Origins* publication, which is an example of new, creative and informative ways of legacy-making. In addition, it encourages skills development and increased legacy awareness for project participants and learners in educational establishments at every level.

## Archival, historical and scientific research

Our philosophy is to be as truthful as possible to the people and events of the past before seeking to bring them to life through different forms of storytelling. Great effort was, therefore, made to research the primary and secondary literature as well as transcribing previously unpublished archives. The primary source of information was the *Proceedings of the Adventurers* that are held in Cambridgeshire Archives. Over 30,000 words were transcribed detailing the work of the Adventurers, which includes many financial, engineering and political challenges as well as details of life in the drainage works in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Many previously unrecorded references to the Scottish soldiers were found.

Other key sources of historical information were the papers of the Council of State in the National Archives and the outputs from the research on the Scottish soldiers in Durham by Durham University. In addition to this research we consulted the Internal Drainage Boards (Middle Level and Ely Group) and Environment Agency who currently manage the drainage of the Fens, to ensure that our description of the drainage works was as accurate as possible.

## Socio-cultural aspects of landscape change

*Origins*, inspired by little-known historical events following the battles of Dunbar and Worcester in 1650 and 1651, tells a story like no other. It records a new historical legacy for the local community, bringing to light events largely neglected with the passage of time: a “missing” history, which affected personal, social and cultural values.

The project is set during the aftermath of the English Civil Wars (1639-1651), also known as The Wars of the Three Kingdoms and the *family wars*, which unleashed dynamic forces here, on the East Anglia Fenland.

Scottish prisoners-of-war, as forced labour, constructed the 21-mile-long second parallel drain, the New Bedford River, now known as the Hundred Foot River, as part of a regional drainage scheme promoted by the Company of Adventurers. This scheme, part of wider geo-political and economic forces, brought about the transformation of the landscape from Fen to productive farmland – a change accompanied by hostility and turmoil. The drainage works reshaped the natural world and the flora and fauna of once wild and mysterious places in the Fenland. The ancient rights of the commons were removed, traditional occupations lost, one's place in the lived-in landscape permanently changed.

We sought to provide as accurate an account as possible of the events surrounding the transfer of the Scottish soldiers after the battles of Dunbar and Worcester to labour on the Fens. We explored how they were employed and treated during their time as prisoners-of-war in an alien landscape. Battle-worn, some as young as 13, they were separated from their families and their homeland without hope of returning until granted official release. They did not speak the language of local people or of other prisoners, principally Dutch and Irish, on the drains.

Interactions between local Fen folk, forced labourers and other incomers created a fraught melding of peoples and their varied customs. And we found that associated memories are woven into local folk tales passed down the generations.

Our research into the nature of the landscape at the time, the working conditions and engineering challenges, led us to understand how only the strongest or the luckiest could have survived the inhumane conditions that, today, would be called a war crime. The soldiers laboured in wet, mud-laden ditches, frozen in winter and infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes in summer. Many men died on the drains and were buried without the blessing of any mourner.

After their release, some of the survivors returned to Scotland, but unknown numbers remained on the Fens and their descendants may be here still. A possible future outcome of this project could entail local people with stories of a Scottish heritage looking deeper into their genealogy and identity. This could influence family and community life in unforeseen, yet enduring ways.

We tell human interest stories underpinned by archaeological and historical research to demonstrate how and why the work of the Scottish soldiers on the Great Level deserve a place in the legacy of the people who live in the Cambridgeshire Fens. We incorporate archival research to open a debate on bringing historical information to life.

Until now, there has been little acknowledgement in public or personal domains of the significant role that the Scottish soldiers and the other drainage construction workers (Dutch, Irish, and locals) played in the ground-breaking construction work. To this day (in combination with modern technology and constant maintenance) the extensive network of drains they dug prevents the Fenland from being inundated by floodwaters. Their legacy is the safe, prosperous, landscape we see around us and it speaks loudly from over three centuries ago to our current generations facing the environmental concerns of climate change and the degradation of land, water and air.

# The Team



Jean Rees-Lyons  
Peter Daldorph  
Florence Tong  
Adam Giles  
Virginie Ganivet  
Helena g Anderson  
Nicola Power

Project Co-coordinator, Author & Scriptwriter  
Consultant Environmentalist & Scriptwriter  
Head of Project Delivery (Babylon ARTS)  
Film-maker  
Film Soundtrack & Vocals  
Photographer & Publication Designer  
Evaluator

# The Word Garden Methodology

The Word Garden has a track record of initiation and implementation of local, regional and nationally funded initiatives. Working with local people, professionals and volunteers, our intra-disciplinary approach demonstrates how combining creative arts activities, human interest stories and archival research promotes innovative, accessible learning across differing levels of ability, age range and ethnic background.

## **Approach, Application and Archive**

As adopted in previous Word Garden National Lottery Heritage Fund supported projects such as *The Family Adams Project* (2012) and *Our Village Tree* (2016) and as here, in this publication, *The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes; the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens*, we are creating primarily a new learning how-to tool-kit.

We achieve our objectives by exploring, researching, imagining, re-creating from authenticated primary and secondary sources and ultimately developing new skills for investigating the roots of change in a community: its history, people, places, activities and events.

This innovative way of bringing know-how to people and people to knowledge is as relevant to the researcher and to educational bodies as it is to individuals and groups interested in how history informs every aspect of social and personal life.

Working together with the local community, historians, archivists, archaeologists and organisations with a special interest in heritage and legacy-making, we find a fresh sense of place. Together, we discover new locations for exploration in and by the community. We turn legacy into learning and archive into action through memory-capture, imagery, expressive writing, photography and film-making.

Word Garden methodology is the combination of historical, archival and scientific research and different forms of storytelling, exemplified in the story and the film of the same name: *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History* and Peter Daldorph's play, *The Scottish Soldier*, based on the Minute Books of the Company of Adventurers.

# Project Achievements and Benefits

## Key Aims of the Origins National Lottery Heritage Fund project:

- to explore a little-known, "missing" period of history, 1650-1653, through archival and scientific research
- to show how changes occur over time, in places and in people's lives
- to adopt and develop a multi-disciplinary methodology of legacy outputs which highlight human interest stories combined in scientific knowledge and creative archival activities
- to engage and increase understanding of heritage awareness and values, and to widen audience participation from personal to organisational: locally, regionally and nationally
- to create a new body of accessible research learning materials compiled from archive searches, folk customs, film-making, photography, performance, publications, experts and professionals in the field: environment, landscape, archaeology, ecology, identity.

## Making it Happen

The major guiding principle underpinning all our imaginings, transcribing, exploring, researching, talking, learning, recreating and recording is to relocate every idea, finding, output, outcome, and every workshop activity at the time and place in the Fen landscape before the construction of the Hundred Foot River. We have taken school children, historians, archivists, archaeologists, environmentalists and members of the public back some 369 years when it may have been possible to see the German Ocean, as the crow flies, from Ely Cathedral.

## Combining Arts, Archaeology, Ancestry in Heritage Learning

The Word Garden local legacy project objectives were to focus on heritage, people and community in differing elements of heritage-making. This was challenging in the extreme. Data were occasionally inaccurate, either scarce or non-existent depending upon which area we were exploring. Whilst the field was wide, our searches focused on specific aspects of study in order to draw as accurate a historical record as possible (although in some areas, acknowledged in the References, we have diverged from historical records for dramatic and artistic purposes).



Military records are available, although often inaccurate or even biased; e.g. the numbers of Scottish casualties detailed after the Battle of Dunbar by Cromwell. Many public records, including Parish Registers, were lost during Cromwell's New Model Army's destruction of all things sacred and personal. *The Ceres Kirk Sessions Minutes* (for 1650) provided quite detailed lifestyle conditions of the period, but mostly covered the wealthy classes. However, a record of "clothes, shooes, shirts, other necessaryes" ... "sutes and stockings" ordered for and worn by the Scottish soldiers working on the Fens is cited in the correspondence of *The Company of Adventurers* (in Wells, 1830). *The Adventurers' Minute Books 1649-1656*, transcribed by Peter Daldorph, also provided significant details of the lives of the Scottish soldiers never previously seen. William Blith's *The English Improver* provides some detail on how drainage work at the time was carried out. Such findings were vital for drama and film costume-making, film script and story-writing.

We also researched records of weather at the time, including *The Seventeenth Century Diary of Ralph Josselin*, which provided insight into the conditions faced by the Scottish soldiers.

On-line web searches were fruitful, and we located primary sources where possible in order to authenticate our outputs. All images and other material gathered and used in the story, play and film for this project are either copyright-free or permissions have been obtained for their use. These precautions are noted for any individual, group or organisation undertaking this vital form of heritage learning.

#### **Archive into Action, Legacy into Learning:**

The purpose of this publication is to demonstrate how The Word Garden methodology works in practice, across disciplines, varying locations, time, place and events past and present, and into future resources for on-going legacy making.

### **Community Engagement in 2019**

#### **Public Events**

Two popular events by The Word Garden included:

- an Information Day at Littleport Society on 12<sup>th</sup> February attended by four local museums, Ely Tourist Information Centre, a variety of local history societies, archaeological groups, Cambridgeshire Geological Society and Fen Edge Trail, and local residents. Names were collected for the Welney Wetland Centre event in June
- a community Drop-in Open Day at Ely City Church on 29<sup>th</sup> March brought *Origins* to a further interested audience eager to find out more about family heritage and the "missing" history stories of the Scottish soldiers, and
- a Local History Fair, Ely Library on 11<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **Schools' Workshop Activities**

- Mepal and Witcham Church of England Primary School on 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June: using a new time-related living history worksheet for a walk by the Hundred Foot River close to the school. The children took photographs and collected wild flowers with which to create flower cards and poems
- Manea Community Primary School on 29<sup>th</sup> April: a workshop visit to Ely Museum provided an interactive, hands-on experience e.g. of drain digging tools, and a food basket containing fen-grown vegetables
- also at Manea Community Primary School on 12<sup>th</sup> June: a creative writing workshop: *A day in the diary, 1650* using secondary source stimulus materials on Fen life.



## **Two-day Workshop at Welney Wetland Centre, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June**

The setting for *Origins'* two-day celebration at Welney Wetland Centre could not have been more fitting. The Centre faces the Hundred Foot River, which was constructed by the Scottish soldiers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, when walking over the bridge to the long viewing hide, participants crossed over the very channel of water to the sea that the soldiers dug.

### **The Programme**

Two full days of displays by Fen Edge Trail (Cambridge Geological Society) and Family History Society, Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey, Mepal and Witcham Primary School, Manea Community Primary School, and Durham University Archaeology Department, were informative and visually stimulating. The artist John Lyons' map, *Fen Islands Before The Drains Came*, was also on show for capacity audiences on both days.

The programme started with an outline of project development and The Word Garden Methodology, followed by presentations:

- *Lost Lives, New Voices: Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers at the Battle of Dunbar 1650* by Richard Annis and Pam Graves from Durham University, and
- *Bodies of Evidence: two Skeletal Workshops* by Anwen Caffell and Andrew Millard from Durham University.



Participants, actors and delegates crossed the bridge over the Hundred Foot River to the long hide to watch *The Scottish Soldiers*, returning to the Centre for the film *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Missing History*.

The event closed with a Q & A Panel comprising The Word Garden, Durham University and local historians answering a variety of in-depth questions from enthusiastic audiences on both days.

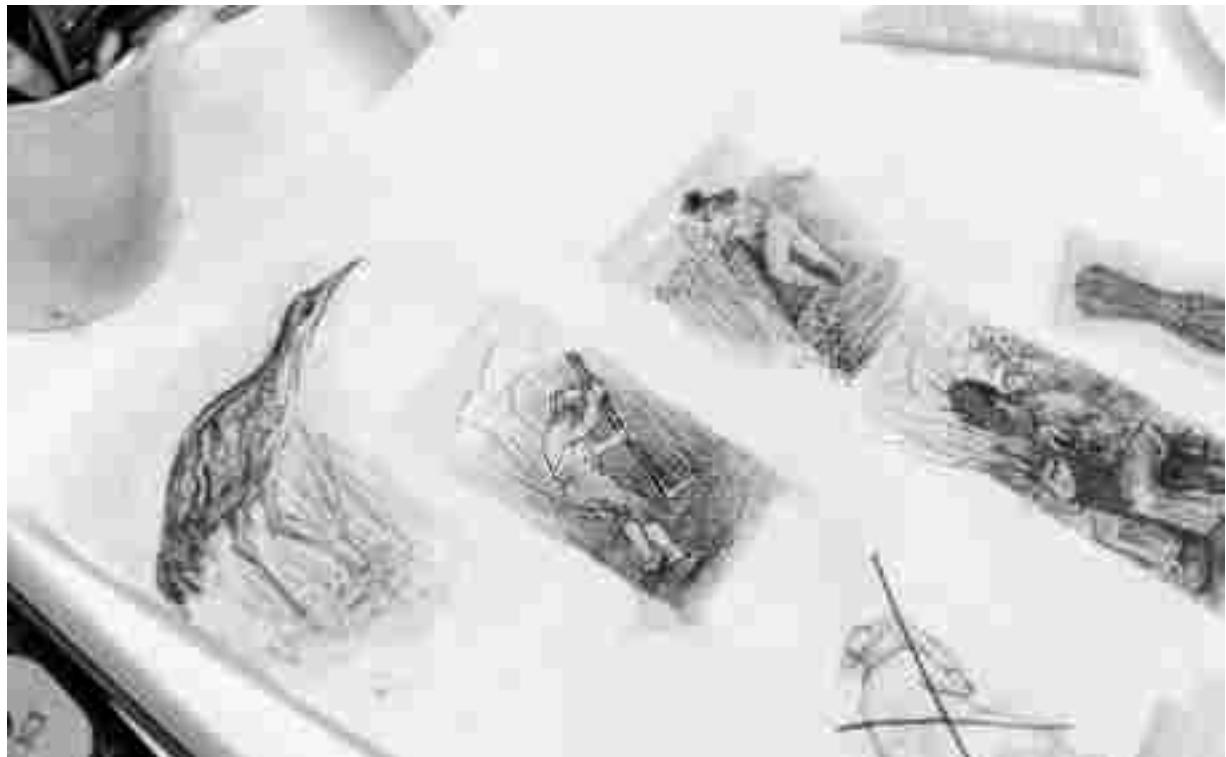
### **The Map, *Fen Islands Before The Drains Came* by John Lyons**

The map, *Fen Islands Before The Drains Came*, was created specifically for The Word Garden's *Origins* project by local artist John Lyons, and will be donated to an organisation in due course. It was inspired by the Blaeu Map of 1648 and is a convincing visual expression of a past when the *terra firma* we now take for granted, like Ely with its surrounding villages, Sutton, Stretham, Haddenham and Littleport, were once islands in the drowned Fens.

John explains its creation: "On a printed copy of the Blaeu map I isolated within a rectangle the area relevant to the *Origins* project which highlighted the part Scottish prisoners-of-war played in the construction of the Hundred Foot River, the New Bedford River, from Earith to Denver, and which is featured in Coventina's quest to find her Tam."

"I made an enlargement of this chosen area of the map and, with hand-drawn methodical precision, copied

its contours and highlighted the River Ouse and causeways, which linked the islands. In an attempt to give a measure of cultural significance to the map, I introduced the dynamic of human involvement with the environment by filling the margins surrounding the image with painted vignettes of some wildlife and everyday activities of the Fens."



#### **The Play *The Scottish Soldier* by Peter Daldorph at Welney Wetland Centre, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June**

For *The Scottish Soldier* the playwright Peter Daldorph carried out research into key individuals involved in the drainage works and brought them back to life in a dramatic performance to deepen awareness of issues of the times.

The play is based on historical research primarily from the *Proceedings of the Adventurers in Cambridgeshire Archives*. The key themes are based on this research, including the opposition of many of the local people to the drainage, the arduous work carried out by the soldiers and the attempts of many of them to escape despite an order from Parliament that if they were caught they would be put to death without mercy. The story of the play is, however, imagined – only a few facts survive on the fate of the individual soldiers, the officers of the Company and the local people.

The characters are:

- A Scottish Soldier, played by Josh Entecott, one of hundreds of soldiers who came to the drainage works in 1651 following the battles of Dunbar and Worcester, caught up in life or death decisions, inhumane working conditions, violent opposition and riots, and the death penalty for attempting to escape
- John Kelsey, Overseer, played by Brian Higgins, employed by the Company to manage the soldiers at work and to prevent them from escaping
- Anthony Hammond, Adventurer, played by Simon Gilligan, a major investor in the works who helped organise prisoner's progress, identify problems and implement Company decisions
- The Fenman, played by Stephen Barker, who fought against the drainage works through political opposition and violence. He also helped prisoners to escape.

## **The Film *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History* at Welney Wetland Centre, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June**

*From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History*, an imaginary journey from Dunure to Denver, by Jean Rees-Lyons, has been adapted from her story of the same name, reproduced in this publication pp.73-121.

Coventina slips through historical time from Hogmanay 1651 when she begins her quest to find Tam, to May 2018 for the re-interment of Tam's remains, to the present day. Rooted in real time the plot moves through time and place to show the interconnectedness of past, present and future.

The film was shot in February beside the Hundred Foot River on flooded Fenland, and at the same location on a sunny day in May by drone, hand-held and video camera work by Paolo Forlin, Research Associate, Durham University and Adam Giles, Cambridge Film Works.

The evocative soundtrack and vocals to the film composed by Virginie Ganivet, also backing the play, were in perfect harmony with Coventina and Tam's story. It captured the mood of this unique place where sky meets earth.

Both characters re-created in their performances their newly-authenticated "missing" lived history to show the universal truth that humankind never learn from history but that hope remains, the very driving force of Coventina's quest.

The characters are:

- Coventina, played by Abby Cornwell, drawn from archival sources became a fictionalised "real" person. She describes authentic places and events during a long landscape walk on tracks, pathways, post roads, and through forest, marsh and moorland, towns and villages, which Tam and his weary kinsmen may have walked under armed guard south to the Fens. Life-changing experiences on Coventina's journey take her further and further into a ghost-like state. As the story-line evolves she becomes a universal symbol for individual freedoms. She is transformed as archetype, the girl in the woman, a philosopher-traveller, historian, soul of the landscape, a *child of her time for our time*. We leave her eternally searching the wash-land between the hand-dug mirrored rivers from Earith to Denver for her Tam
- Tam, played by Duncan Hedley-Rees, grew up in Dunure with Coventina. They sail Doon Bay together, explore the underground tunnels of Greenan Castle ruins. As a young, idealistic Covenanter he went off to war with his father to fight against Cromwell in one of the many massacres of The Wars of the Three Kingdoms. He does not return with other soldiers to their fishing village after the battle and when Coventina decides to find him he comes to her in waking and sleeping dreams, guiding her through ancient landscapes, always ahead, always out of reach.

Our real-life Tam survived the battle, was captured and, with thousands of his fellow soldiers, was made to march from Dunbar to Durham, only to die in Durham Cathedral and be buried in an "open hole" close to Durham Castle. His remains were discovered in November 2013 during the building of a new café next to the Archaeology Department of Durham University. He was the most "whole" of the found soldiers, and was designated Skeleton 22. Expertly, through skeletal science by Durham University archaeologists and a 3D facial depiction by the ART LABS Research Centre at Liverpool School of Art and Design, John Moores University, he was made "young again".

His remains were re-interred in May 2018 at Elvet Road Cemetery in Durham and here, now, have been brought back to a fictional life, living and toiling on the East Anglia Fens in 1651. Origins has created a new history born of tragedy in the story arc from Doon Bay in Dunure to Doon Hill at Dunbar, to drainage works at Denver.

This portrayal is of fictionalised “real” characters seen in real places past and present: Coventina as a young woman, who eventually haunts the second drain; and Tam, a ghostly figure who becomes “real” as he walks into the Fen landscape when Coventina finally finds him at Denver.

In both the play and the film *Origins* is weaving archive, contemporary scientific fact and human interest stories into a word and image tapestry which forms research-driven and arts-based tools for wide-ranging, in-depth, focused teaching, learning, and ultimately exploring.

The play, the film, the story, and the publication, are prime examples of The Word Garden methodology in action.

### **Project Godwit, Welney Wetland Centre, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June**

An unexpected and very welcome legacy outcome from *Origins* has been a collaboration with Welney Wetland Centre on Project Godwit which aims to secure the future of black-tailed godwits in the UK (which has a breeding population of just c. 60 pairs). Because of their vulnerability to extinction, these beautiful waders are red-listed in the UK and possess Near Threatened status globally.

The project is a partnership between The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) with major funding from the EU LIFE Nature Programme, HSBC's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund, Natural England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It entails wet grassland habitat management, a rear-and-release programme for chicks, and tracking of the ringed birds during their migration and return to the UK. This year, a total of 48 “headstarted” chicks were released on the RSPB Nene Washes and from WWT Welney.

The culmination to the second workshop day at Welney was the presentation by Jess Owen, Project Godwit Engagement Officer, of a certificate to The Word Garden: “In honour of the Scottish soldiers who, as prisoners-of-war, worked in the Fens in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, fifteen black-tailed godwits have been named.”

The godwits were released on Lady Fen at Welney Wetland Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

They are a fine tribute to the Scottish Soldiers and The Word Garden is delighted to be able to include them in our re-found local history. Now, as they take flight across many changing landscapes, they are a new legacy story for our unique Fen-scape: a conservation message of hope. We look forward to their return in 2020.



# Acknowledgements and Support

Jean Rees-Lyons, Project Coordinator, on behalf of The Word Garden team states that there would have been no National Lottery Heritage Fund supported project, *The Scottish Soldiers, the Ouse Washes; the Origins of Landscape Change in the Fens*, without the support of many organisations and individuals. We wish to thank and acknowledge *Robyn Llewellyn*, Head of National Lottery Heritage Fund, East England, for her continued and generous support; also *Claire Somerville*, Executive Director Babylon ARTS, for guidance throughout this unique project.

A special mention goes to *Christopher Gerrard*, Professor in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University, for his advocacy of The Word Garden's methodology, to *John Lyons*, artist, for the map *Fen Islands before the Drains Came*, as unique as the landscape it depicts. Thank you for this insightful artwork. We thank John also for his landscape poetry workshops on 6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> June at Mepal and Witcham Primary School.

Also, *Florence Tong*, Head of Project Delivery, Babylon ARTS, who has enabled The Word Garden *Origins* team to implement its on-going tasks with efficiency and flair, and *Nicola Power* for evaluation timeline guidance and how to meet planning objectives in terms of outcomes and outputs so essential to effective project-making. Also, *Barbara Grafton*, Mentor for the Project Coordinator, for historical research, imagery sourcing, and montages. Her attention to detail and specialist insight of the use of data in prose writing is second to none.

The Word Garden is indebted to those who shared their specialist knowledge and expertise: *Mark Nokkert*, Cambridgeshire ACRE: introductions to relevant practitioners, physical and social aspects of surrounding locations, climate issues and changes in occupational structures of the area; *Mike Petty MBE*, local historian: pre-project and on-going guidance to The Word Garden team, Community Open Day and Q & A participation; also *Elizabeth Stazicker*, archives and heritage: text guidance of Jonas Moore's Mapp of the Great Levell of the Fenns, 1658, support for *Origins*, and Q & A Panel Welney Wetland Centre. Also, grateful thanks are due to *John Goldsmith* and *Sonia Tycko* for their help in historical and archival research.

Durham University Department of Archaeology: *Pamela Graves, Andrew Millard, Anwen Caffell, Richard Annis*: inspiring workshop presentations at Welney Wetland Centre two-day celebratory event. Also *Sophie Daniels*: guidance, historical and scientific accuracy vis-a-vis drama productions, specifically linked with Durham University's on-going Scottish Soldiers Research Project to aid our application to NLHF.

Many thanks to *Paolo Forlin*, Research Associate, for his artful drone work. *Morag Cross*, Kirkintilloch, author: women's domestic work, language, prisoner relationships. Also, *Alejandra Gutiérrez, Jeff Veitch and Angela Gemmill* for Copyright Agreements, the use of images in the publication and the film.

We thank *Peter Daldorph* for his informative and powerful play *The Scottish Soldier*, based upon his transcription from the *Proceedings of the Adventurers Minute Books*, and the four volunteer actors in authenticated roles for their freely-given commitment to the portrayal of once "real" people in unreal circumstances: *Josh Entecott, Brian Higgins, Simon Gilligan, and Stephen Barker*, all of whom gave compelling portrayals of significant men of their time who helped to change history. We also wish to give thanks to *Phil Robinson* for lighting the performance and set building. Also *Cromwell House (Ely)* and *Dereham Theatre Costumes*: period costumes and shoes; also, the Adams Heritage Centre: loan of peat digging spade; and to *Christine Butcher*: for making period-appropriate costumes from historical documents. Peter Daldorph wishes to thank his wife, *Elizabeth Harrington*, for her patience and help during the many hours spent transcribing the Minute Books and writing the play.

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Finally, we thank all project participants and audiences across Cambridgeshire for their enthusiasm and wish to see further opportunities for legacy-making whether in future publications or as a result of their discovery of long-forgotten Scottish ancestors and their descendants. It would be fitting to see something even more tangible for, in the words of author *Trevor Bevis*, "shamefully there is no monument" to the work of the Scottish soldiers, except a "monument all around", the no-longer drowned Fens.



# History of the Scottish Soldiers in the Fens

by Peter Daldorph



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## Introduction

Hundreds of Scottish soldiers who fought in the Civil War in the early 1650s were moved to Cambridgeshire as prisoners-of-war to work on the drainage schemes in the Great Level of the Fens. Their efforts helped create the 21-mile-long Hundred Foot River, along with many other great drains and embankments that survive to this day. These drainage works, promoted by the Company of Adventurers, resulted in a great transformation of the landscape and social structures in Eastern England and constitute a key moment in a wider transformation of the country that resulted from the enclosures of common land.

The *Origins* project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, seeks to tell the story of the Scottish prisoners-of-war in Cambridgeshire through historical research, engagement with the people who live in the area and bringing the events to life through storytelling, drama and film.

Key primary sources of much of the material presented in this book are the Minute Books of the Company of Adventurers held by Cambridgeshire Archives. These provide a remarkably detailed record of the day-to-day business of the Company, including many references to the Scottish soldiers (many of which were not included in Wells 1830,<sup>138</sup> previously the main reference to them).



fig. 1.1

## Timeline

A timeline of key events leading up to and during the deployment of the Scottish prisoners-of-war in the drainage works is provided below. It begins with the opposition of the Scottish Presbyterian church to the reforms to religious services proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, with the support of Charles I, which led to the signing of the Scottish Covenant in 1638. During the Civil War, Scottish soldiers fought with and against Cromwell's Parliamentary forces but in the end were defeated by Cromwell on the battlefields of Dunbar and Worcester. Many prisoners-of-war were captured by the Commonwealth army at these battles, some of whom were moved to the Fens. The drainage works were promoted by the Company of Adventurers, led by the Earls of Bedford in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertakings before and after the Civil War. The Scottish prisoners-of-war were transferred to the Fens in 1651 as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking.

Date	Event
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1638	<b>Signing of the Scottish Covenant</b> <sup>145,151,152</sup> The Covenant was first signed at Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh on the 28 <sup>th</sup> of February 1638. It was a formalisation of the objections of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland to the changes to the way religious practices and church services were held; innovations proposed by Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, and supported by King Charles I. In particular, these reforms imposed bishops, the Book of Canons and the Book of Common Prayer. The Covenant pledged those who swore it to defend the true religion against such innovations. Within days it had been signed by the people of Edinburgh and copies were then sent around the country for others to sign. In a few weeks it had been signed by people throughout the Lowlands of Scotland, including almost all the nobles.
January 1631	<b>Formation of the Group of Adventurers led by the Duke of Bedford for the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking to drain the Great Level</b> <sup>138,141</sup> Following a quarter of a century of abortive and failed drainage schemes, the 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford was nominated as undertaker at court of sewers held at King's Lynn on the 13 <sup>th</sup> January 1631 with an award of 95,000 acres of which King Charles would receive 12,000 acres on completion of the scheme (also known as Lynn Law). The contract received royal consent on the 26 <sup>th</sup> July 1631.
June 1636	<b>Completion of the drainage works of the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking</b> <sup>138,141</sup> declared on the 13 <sup>th</sup> June 1636 at Peterborough.
Spring 1637	<b>A catastrophic failure of the Old Bedford River</b> <sup>134</sup> resulted in inundation in the surrounding lands.
April 1638	<b>Huntingdon adjudication</b> <sup>138,141</sup> Following a series of petitions denouncing the scheme and denying its efficacy, accompanied by commoner violence, King Charles I called an investigatory session of the court of sewers at Huntingdon. On the 12 <sup>th</sup> April 1638, after six days of examination, the commissioners declared the drainage had not been perfected within the agreed six years and at a further session on the 18 <sup>th</sup> July the King was declared the undertaker with an increased award of 152,000 acres. He appointed Cornelius Vermuyden as Director of Works.
1640	<b>Invasion of England by the Scottish army under General Leslie</b> <sup>152</sup> The opposition to King Charles reforms of the church by the Scottish led him to raise an army of 20,000 men to restore his rule in Scotland. The subsequent engagement is known as the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Bishops Wars. Engagements between the armies were limited, however, and no major battles were fought. Charles struggled to fund and equip his army and the campaign collapsed when parliament refused to raise funds. The Scots crossed the border and took areas of northern England including Newcastle and Durham. They controlled the city until a cessation of hostilities was agreed in August 1641.
1642	<b>Charles I established his court in Oxford</b> <sup>152</sup> after fleeing from London as hostility to his regime grew. This was followed in October by the Battle of Edgehill, the first large battle in the Civil War.
July 1644	At the <b>Battle of Marston Moor</b> <sup>151,152</sup> Scottish Soldiers fought alongside Cromwell's Parliamentary forces and inflicted a key defeat on the Royalist army.

<b>January 1649</b>	The <b>execution of Charles I</b> <sup>152</sup> was carried out on the 30 <sup>th</sup> January 1649.
<b>May 1649</b>	<b>Act for drayning the Great Level of the Fens</b> <sup>138,141,155</sup> that led to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Undertaking was passed on the 30 <sup>th</sup> May 1649. This re-established the Company of Adventures led by the Earl of Bedford as the undertaker of the drainage works.
<b>January 1650</b>	Following prolonged and difficult negotiations <b>Cornelius Vermuyden was appointed as Director of Works</b> <sup>138,150</sup> for the drainage of the Great Level.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1650</b>	<b>Battle of Dunbar</b> <sup>145,151</sup> The Scottish army led by General Leslie was defeated by Cromwell's Parliamentary Army.
<b>April 1651</b>	<b>Adjudication in Peterborough and Wisbech</b> <sup>136,141</sup> that the drainage of lands north of the Bedford River had been successfully completed.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1651</b>	<b>Battle of Worcester</b> <sup>151,156</sup> The Scottish army led by Charles II was defeated by Cromwell's Parliamentary Army.
<b>October 1651</b>	<b>Arrival of the first group of Scottish prisoners</b> of war in the Fens from London. <sup>138,141</sup>
<b>Autumn 1652</b>	<b>Departure of the last of the Scottish prisoners</b> from the Fens.

## Political context and attitudes to the drainage works

During the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, opinions were highly divided on the benefits of general draining of the lowland fens and marshes in Eastern England.

A justification for the drainage works in the Fens is presented in the first section of the 1649 Drainage Act<sup>133</sup> that led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking. It is primarily an economic argument that the value of the land and its production would be increased to the benefit of the nation and local population.



Whereas the said Great Level, by reason of frequent overflowing of the Rivers of Welland, Neane, Grant, Owse, Brandon, Mildenhall and Stoake have been of small and uncertain profit, but (if drained), may be improved and made profitable, and of great Advantage to the Commonwealth, and the particular Owners, Commoners and Inhabitants, and be fit to bear Cole-seed and Rape-seed in great abundance, which is of singular use to make Sope and Oyls within this Nation, to the advancement of the Trade of Clothing and Spinning of Wooll, and much of it will be improved into good pasture for feeding and breeding of Cattel, and for Tillage, to be sown with Corn and Grain, and for Hemp and Flax in great quantity, for making all sorts of Linen Cloth, and Cordage for Shipping within this Nation, which will increase Manufactures, Commerce, and Trading at home and abroad, will relieve the Poor, by setting them on work, and will many other ways rebound to the great advantage and strengthning of the Nation.

fig. 1.2

The main proponents of the schemes were landowners who sought to gain financially from the increased value of their own lands and investors who sought to gain land in return for funding the drainage works.<sup>138,141,145,147,148,155</sup> Before the Civil War, the royal court promoted the works to raise income through taxation and transfer of land into the royal estate. It argued that the works would benefit the well-being of the people of the Fens, the security of food supply and the finances of the nation. It also argued that the drainage had deteriorated, and flooding had become an increasing problem, so remediation was required. The desire to take forward large scale drainage was strongly influenced by successful schemes that had achieved these ends in continental Europe, notably in Holland.<sup>145, 148</sup>

Some advocates of the drainage works portrayed the people of the Fens as uncivilised and wretched, for example,<sup>134,139</sup> "the generality of the Fen people were very poor, lazy, given much to fishing and idleness, who were very much against the drainage because they feared their condition should be worse, which truly was almost impossible". Cornelius Vermuyden<sup>150</sup> described the Fens as "home to lazy and barbarous people who trap eels and other such trash foods." In another contemporary text of 1629,<sup>139</sup> the following view was expressed in support of the draining works: "in the winter time, when the ice is strong enough to hinder the passage of boats (as hath been by some observed) and yet not able to bear a man; the inhabitants upon the hards and banks within the Fens, can have no help of food, nor comfort of body or soul; no woman aid in her travel, no means to baptize her child, or partake on the Communion, nor supply any necessity, saving what those poor desolate places do afford. And what expectation of health can there be to the bodies of men, where there is no element good? The air being for the most part cloudy, gross and full of rotten harrs; the water putrid and muddy, yea full of loathsome vermin; the earth spongy and boggy, and the fire noisome, by the stink of smoaky hassocks".

Despite these arguments, objections to and resistance against the drainage schemes were strong throughout the Fens,<sup>141,155</sup> which included all levels of society and it proved to be impossible for the early proposals during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I to gain support in Parliament. The objections were based on the view that widespread drainage would disrupt a way of life, particularly commoner rights that provided the means for the local population of the Fens to gain a living, through grazing on the rich pastures of the summer grounds, and fishing and wildfowling in the winter. Common rights and the bond between people sharing those rights had been central to the identity of the Fenland people for hundreds of years.<sup>149</sup> These views are expressed clearly in a pamphlet called the Antiprojector<sup>136</sup> that was written in the 1640s during the period when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking sought approval in Parliament.

The pamphlet states that "The undertakers have always vilified the Fens and have mis-informed many Parliament men, that all the Fens is a mere quagmire, and that it is a level hurtfully surrounded and of little or no value; but those which live in the Fens and are neighbours to it, know the contrary;

"For first the Fens breeds infinite number of serviceable horses, mares and colts which till our land and furnish our neighbours. Secondly we breed and feed great store of young cattle and we keep great dayries, which afford great store of butter and cheese to victual the Navy and multitudes of heifers and Scots and Irish cattle have been fattened on the Fens, which afford hides and tallow. Thirdly, we mow off our Fens fodder, which feeds our cows in winter, which being housed, we gather such quantities of compost and dung that it enriches our pastures and corn grounds, half in half, whereby we have the richest and certainest corn land in England, especially for wheat and barley wherewith by Sea we do and can (if our navigable rivers be not made unserviceable by the undertakers pernicious new ditches) abundantly furnish London and the Northern parts in their necessities. All which fore-recited commodities make our Fens far more profitable to the owners, lying as they are for grass, then if they were sown with corn, rape, or cole feed. Fourthly, we keep great flocks of sheep upon the Fens. Fifthly, our Fens are a great relief, not only to our neighbors the uplanders but to remote Countries, which otherwise for years thousands of cattle would want food. Sixthly, we have great store of Osier, Reed and Sedge which are such necessities as the Countries cannot want them for many users and sets many poor on work. Lastly, we have many thousand Cottagers which live in our Fens, which otherwise must go a begging. So that if the undertakers take from us a third of our Fens, they destroy not only our

pastures and corn ground, but also our poor and utterly disable us to relieve them.

"What is Cole-seed and Rape, they are but Dutch commodities and but trash and trumpery and pills land, in respect to the fore-recited commodities, which are the rich Oare of the Common-wealth.

"The Project have proved the Philosophers stone, or that accursed thing to the undertakers, for it had undone most of them that ever medled with it. The caust is plain because it hath proved a Grindstone to the faces of thousands of poor people."

Similar views to the Antiprojector were expressed by opponents of the schemes in Parliament and through petitions and testimonies to special councils that were set up to review the case for drainage.<sup>155</sup>

The condition of the drainage of the Fens before the large drainage schemes began, was in parts poor. For example, the Old West River, the former course of the River Ouse to Benwick, where it joined the River Nene, was blocked by silt and plant growth to the degree that the direction of flow reversed, taking water down from the Nene rather than draining toward it. Severe inland flooding of parts of the Fens occurred in 1614 due to rapid melting of snow in the uplands.<sup>148</sup> Attitudes to the proposed drainage schemes are likely to have varied greatly across the vast area of the Fens; areas affected by flooding and poor drainage may have sought relief whilst, in other areas, where drainage was better, the schemes were more likely to be opposed.

Attitudes were heightened further by the way in which the drainage schemes of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century were carried out. In many cases, the schemes failed in their aims and sometimes resulted in increased flooding<sup>148</sup> (for example works carried out by Sir Miles Sandys near Willingham). The drainers were also accused of corruptly influencing the courts of sewers by filling them with their own men.<sup>136,148,155</sup> Petitions incorrectly purporting local support were presented to Parliament and the royal court. The Adventurers were accused of "packing" the commissioners of sewers so that they behaved in a most partial manner, forcing the work upon the commoners without their consent.<sup>136</sup> In 1637, the Old Bedford River created during the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking burst its banks when first used to divert floodwater from the old course of the River Ouse, inundating large areas, which increased objections about the competency of the drainage engineers.<sup>134</sup> These failures of drainage, opposition of the local people and political tension between the king and undertakers led to an adjudication through investigatory sessions at Huntingdon in April 1638<sup>155</sup> which declared that the drainage had not been perfected. This further heightened tensions; the way of life of the locals had been disrupted but the promised benefits had not been realised.

During the period before the Civil War when Parliament increasingly opposed the rule of Charles I, many members of Parliament supported the commoners and their claims against the drainage schemes,<sup>155</sup> notably Oliver Cromwell who became known at the time as Lord of the Fennes (originally a term of abuse by Royalist propagandists). Previously, he is believed to have acted as the commoners' spokesman at the Huntingdon adjudication sessions before becoming an MP. A situation developed in which the House of Commons opposed many of the proposed undertakings and supported the commoner rights whereas the King and House of Lords supported the undertakers. The discussions in the House of Commons about the drainage schemes became extremely heated in the fractious environment before the outbreak of the Civil War and formed part of a wider breakdown of trust between opposing parties, soon take to arms.

Following Parliament's victory in the Civil War, the undertakers proposed new schemes for widespread drainage of the Fens. Eventually, this led to the 1649 Act of Parliament<sup>133</sup> to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking proposed by the Earl of Bedford and his associates. This followed a period of intense and passionate debate in Parliament during which the Parliamentary committee of the Great Level which was set up in 1646 to receive evidence from both sides. The proceedings of the committee were heavily criticised for their failure to take and review evidence impartially. The Antiprojector<sup>136</sup> and other pamphlets made complaint against the earlier schemes and the way the Act was passed. These complaints include the undertakers falsely claiming support of the commoners, exaggerating the deficiencies in the current state of the drainage and various forms of bribery,

corruption and conflicts of interest. The pamphlet claims that evidence provided by the opponents of the schemes was not examined and meetings were delayed so that petitioners were forced to return home before they could give evidence. When the Act was passed, the number of Members of Parliament sitting in the House of Commons was very small (only 43 members) and was filled with MPs who were linked with the undertakers.

The 1649 Act gave statutory recognition to William, Earl of Bedford, as the lawful successor to the undertaking of his late father, Francis, and declared the 1638 Huntingdon adjudication null and void. The recompense of 95,000 acres to the Earl and his associates was restored and the Adventurers were given until October 1656 to complete the works. In January 1650, Vermuyden was appointed Director of the Works.<sup>150</sup>

Cromwell supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking which was a key factor in the passage the 1649. His support for the scheme suggests his previous defence of the commoners may have been expedient, although it may be that his concern was for the way the commoners had been treated rather than opposition to drainage per se. Cromwell may have also simply changed his mind; as leader of the nation, the national interests must have become of prime importance to him; the prospect of increasing agricultural production from a large part of England must have been attractive in a period when the Commonwealth was seeking to establish its long term future.

Throughout the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, opposition to the drainage schemes in the Fens was also expressed in the form of civil disorder by the commoners against the undertakers and their workers.<sup>155</sup> This mainly took the form of low-level violence against the drainage workers, physical attacks on drains, banks and sluices and the moving of herds of cattle onto enclosed land in areas that had once been common grounds. On occasions, the attacks became more serious in the form of physical assaults against drainage workers and damage to the properties of the undertakers and landlords of the newly enclosed lands, particularly in the northern areas of the Fens. The resistance against the drainage works appears to have been supported widely by people in the area and local constables and justices of the peace often failed to act against the rioters and, in some cases, members of the local gentry may have played a role in organising resistance. Such events can also be viewed as part of a wider breakdown in civil order that occurred in the run up to Civil War. Enclosure of the land, previously used by commoners, was a frequent cause of disturbance, examples occurring in Cottenham, Yaxley, Wicken, Burwell, Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham in 1638. Following the Huntingdon Adjudication, commoners sought to reclaim their rights and on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1638<sup>155</sup> Sir Miles Sandys wrote from his home in Wilburton that, "Whilst I am writing this letter, word was brought by my Lord of Bedford's workmen, that the country rose up against him, both in Coveney and Littleport, by the example of the Wicken men. And I fear that if present order not be taken at the beginning, it will turn to a general rebellion in all the fen towns, whereof you shall do well to acquaint the lords." Further riots occurred in Whelpmore and Burnt Fen, in the Isle of Ely, in June 1638 when 200 men filled in enclosure ditches. Tensions were eased by an adjudication of the court of sewers in July 1638 that commoners could retain possession of such fens where they could prove that drainage works were deficient pending adjudication. During this period and the Civil War, maintenance of the drainage works was poor, and the commoners recovered the use of much of their common lands.

When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking work commenced in 1649, the many risks to its successful delivery must have been clear to the Adventurers. In addition to the engineering risks associated with such a large project, evidenced by the failure of the Old Bedford River in 1637, there was a clear potential for large scale local opposition which could result in expensive legal battles, as well as physical disruption of the works. During this period many petitions were raised against the scheme which required legal defence at the court of sewers. Creating a workforce to carry out the drainage works was a further problem, no doubt worsened by the failure to pay the promised wages to the workers on the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking.<sup>138</sup> A lawsuit was issued in 1646 against the Adventurers, claiming unpaid wages by the labourers who worked on the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking.<sup>155</sup> The Adventurers also had to deal with debts that had built up during the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking and the subsequent failure to recover the benefits in the form of land transfers to their estates. The Company of Adventurers,

however, had advantage and security from their close relationship with Parliament, the Council of State and Cromwell (several of the Adventurers were Members of Parliament including the Lord Chief Justice St John).<sup>141</sup> This allowed them access to the government from their base in Temple Bar in London and receive its support, for example in the transfer of prisoners of war to the works and support from the army in quelling civil disobedience.

## Key people involved in the drainage works

### The Adventurers and Officers

The 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking in the 1630s was taken forward by a small group of Practitioners led by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford who divided the future land acquisitions into 20 parts or lots, each consisting of four thousand acres.<sup>138</sup> Most of the Practitioners were wealthy Members of Parliament, some with local interest in the Fens through existing land holdings, whereas, for others, it was a financial investment alongside mines and tobacco in North America. The Practitioners and their number of lots were (**names in bold were also involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking**): Francis Russell, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford (3 lots), Oliver St John (1 lot), **Edward Lord Gorges** (1 lot), Sir Robert Heath (1 lot), Sir Miles Sandys (2 lots), **William Russell, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford** (2 lots), Sir Robert Bevill (1 lot), William Sams (1 lot), **Anthony Hammond** (2 lots), Sir Thomas Terringham (1 lot), Samuel Spalding (1 lot), Andrew Burrell (1 lot), Sir Robert Lovett (1 lot).

The 1649 Act of Drainage voided the findings on the Huntingdon Adjudication under King Charles I and, therefore, in effect, returned the venture to the original shareholders. However, in the twenty years that had passed many of the original Adventurer's had died. Although the heirs to their estates took on ownership of the lots, this was complicated by the debts incurred and the transformed political situation with some of the individuals having been on the "wrong side" in the Civil War. The Company of Adventurers required any members who were unable to contribute financially, as agreed, to sell part or all their lots to raise funds for the undertaking, which extended their number. Consequently, a much larger group of Adventurers were involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking which was less dominated by the aristocracy (reflecting, also, the changed times). The list below shows the attendees at the meetings of the Adventurers before the adjudication on the drainage in 1652;<sup>138</sup> a key moment for the scheme and one that those involved would surely have wanted to attend. Many of these individuals were later to receive lots of land. The Earl of Bedford, took the largest portion of his shares from his late father.

Mr Henley Snr	Mr Hamond	Mr Bradley	Coll Sam.Jones	Sir Edward Patheriche
Mr Trafford	Mr Spalding	Mr Draper	Mr Walker	Mr B.Arthur
Sir Gilbert Gerrard	Mr Sam. Smith	Mr Browne	Mr Buffkin	Mr Neale
Sir Cornelius Vermuyden	Mr Thurlow	Mr Hampson	Mr Holworthy	Mr Henry Fenn
Mr Trenchard	Mr Say	Capt Blackwall	Coll Walton	Mr W.Crane
Mr Longe	Mr Carrill	Mr Wm.Smith	Corn Vermuyden	Sir John Potts
Earl of Bedford	Mr Gorges	Mr Henne	Mr Holman	Mr W.Weston
Lord Chief Justice St John	Mr John Russell	Mr Marcham	Mr Latch	Mr Jessop

Some of the key individuals who were involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking are listed in the table below.

Name	Biography
<b>Sir William Russell Earl of Bedford</b> <sup>154,158</sup>	The son of Francis, 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford, who led the 1 <sup>st</sup> Undertaking, became the 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford at the age of 24 in May 1641, when his father died unexpectedly of smallpox. He held 2 lots from the 1 <sup>st</sup> Undertaking and inherited 3 lots from his father, making him the largest stakeholder in the Company of Adventurers.

	<p>In April 1640, Russell was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Tavistock in the Short Parliament. He was re-elected MP for Tavistock in the Long Parliament in November 1640 and sat until 1641. Russell followed his father's lead and sided with Parliament in its emerging conflict with Charles I. Although he was only 24 at the time, Parliament gave Bedford considerable responsibilities, naming him a commissioner to treat with the king in 1641 then Lord Lieutenant of Devon and Lord Lieutenant of Somerset in 1642. He was made General of the Horse in the Parliamentary Service on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1642 and in September he led an expedition in western England against royalist forces under the command of the Marquess of Hertford. He then fought with the Parliamentarians in the Battle of Edgehill on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1642. Bedford became one of the 'peace lords' who abandoned the Parliamentary cause and joined Charles I at Oxford: the king pardoned Bedford for his previous offence.</p> <p>Bedford returned to battle, this time on the side of the Royalists, with his participation in the Siege of Gloucester (3<sup>rd</sup> August – 5<sup>th</sup> September 1643) and the first Battle of Newbury (20<sup>th</sup> September 1643). Although Charles I fully pardoned Bedford, Charles' inner circle remained wary of Bedford and was therefore reluctant to give him anything but minor responsibilities. Disillusioned, Bedford returned to the Parliamentary side in December 1643, claiming that he had only attempted to negotiate a settlement with the king and had never intended to abandon the Parliamentary cause. Parliament, however, remained wary of a man who had abandoned them and refused to allow Bedford to retake his seat in the House of Lords.</p> <p>Following his father's death William Russell, Earl of Bedford, led the efforts to restore his family's role in the drainage of the Fens and nullify the Huntingdon Adjudication, partly to recover debts incurred in the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking. He played the lead role, with Cornelius Vermuyden, in the drainage works of the 1650s and the subsequent establishment of the Bedford Corporation before his death in 1670.</p>
<b>Cornelius Vermuyden<sup>150</sup></b>	<p>Cornelius Vermuyden was appointed as Director of Works of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking to drain the Great Level by the Company of Adventurers on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1650. His appointment was controversial amongst members and negotiations lasted several months. As late as December 1650 an alternative scheme led by Sir Edward Patheriche, with Colonel Dodson as the chief engineer, was proposed and approved at a meeting of the Company.<sup>138</sup> The fraught nature of these negotiations was related to the degree to which Vermuyden would be given a free hand in proceeding with the works and his financial reward, including land holdings. Opposition to Vermuyden may also have been related to his abrasive manner and controversies related to his earlier works on the embankment of the River Thames and in the Isle of Axholme on Yorkshire. There was also local resentment against the drainage being led by a foreigner. Vermuyden, however, was the only truly experienced manager of large-scale drainage works in England, so the alternatives would have entailed even greater risk which is likely to be the key reason why, in the end, he secured the work.</p> <p>Vermuyden was born in 1595 in the Isle of Tholen in Zeeland in the Netherlands where he received his initial training and experience in drainage engineering. He came to England in 1620 and was soon to work on the flood banks of the River Thames at Dagenham and then in the drainage of the Isle of Axholme which was largely funded from The Netherlands. The works proved to be highly controversial because of intense opposition by the locals, whose long standing common rights had been overridden.</p> <p>Although Vermuyden and his Dutch associates put forward proposals for the initial</p>

	<p>drainage works on the Great Level in 1630, the work was finally awarded to the Earl of Bedford and the degree to which Vermuyden was involved in this work is unclear.<sup>157</sup> However, after the work was adjudged to be unsuccessful at the Huntingdon Adjudication in 1638, he was appointed as Director of Works by King Charles I, although these plans were then overtaken by the Civil War. In 1638, Vermuyden wrote his <i>Discourse Touching the Draining of the Great Fennes</i><sup>137</sup> which was later published in 1642; eventually forming the basis of his later work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking.</p> <p>His work for the Company of Adventurers ended abruptly 1655, after which he was no longer mentioned in the Minute Books. The circumstances of his departure are unclear, although there were allegations of financial impropriety. The Minute Books provide details of many disputes between Vermuyden and the Company, related to how the works were being carried out and financial issues related to his land holdings and payment of workers. Although disliked, it seems he was tolerated for his essential engineering skills until his services were no longer required. He died in London in 1677.</p>
<b>Anthony Hammond</b> <sup>154</sup>	Anthony Hammond held 2 lots in the 1 <sup>st</sup> Undertaking and was a member of the Society of Conservators established in the 1635 Act. He was also one of the key members of the Company of Adventurers of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Undertaking and features heavily in the minutes during 1651 to 1652. During this period, he was based in the Fens (although his family was originally from Kent, he owned a house in Wilburton) and provided letters detailing progress with the work and implemented decisions of the Company locally. He was involved in the negotiations with Cornelius Vermuyden prior to his appointment of Director of Works in January 1650, supporting Partheriche's alternative proposals for management of the drainage. In 1653 he was described as Conservator of the South Level. In 1656 has was appointed as a Lord of the Level and jurat. He died in 1661.
<b>John Henley</b> <sup>154</sup>	John Henley was a prominent member of the Company of Adventurers, and was involved in many of the key decisions and transactions. He was a strong advocate of Vermuyden and helped facilitate his final appointment of Director of Works in 1650. He became Treasurer of the Company in June 1650 and held this position for many years. His house in Temple Bar in London was used for many of the meetings of the Company. He was active for the Company until his death in 1656.
<b>John Latch</b> <sup>154</sup>	John Latch acted as solicitor for the Company of Adventurers. He became involved in the drainage works through his engagement with Nicholas Vernatti during the 1 <sup>st</sup> Undertaking (and Hatfield Chase). He was involved in complex legal disputes with Vernatti and his associates which may have resulted in financial problems of his own. In 1651, a petition was presented to the Company and to the Commissioners of Adjudication related to the failure to pay 500 labourers during earlier drainage works. He was required to be 'constant upon the works' and was resident in the Fens from May to October 1650 during which he was paid £20 per month for his services. He also acted as Comptroller for part of 1652. He died in 1657.
<b>Lord Chief Justice St John</b> <sup>154,158</sup>	St John rose to national prominence in 1637 when he served as legal officer in the challenge to the legality of King Charles I's imposition of ship-money. He was appointed solicitor-general in January 1641 at the instigation of his patron the Earl of Bedford, who advised the King to appoint ministers trusted by Parliament. After the defeat of the King in the First Civil War, St John co-operated with Cromwell and the Army Grandees in their efforts to limit the power of the monarchy.

	<p>In October 1648, St John was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He was nominated to the first Council of State in February 1649 after the establishment of the Commonwealth. Early in 1651, St John led a diplomatic mission on behalf of the Commonwealth to the United Provinces of the Netherlands.</p> <p>Following the Commonwealth's military conquest of Scotland, St John was one of the commissioners appointed to set up the new civil administration. St John held 1 lot from the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking.<sup>138,141</sup> His position at the heart of government is likely to have been important in building then maintaining support for the drainage works. He played a central role in facilitating Council of State agreement for the transfer of the Scottish soldiers to the Fens. After the restoration, he retired to his house in Northamptonshire until 1662, then went into exile, first at Basel then at Augsburg in Germany where he died in December 1673.</p>
<b>John Trenchard</b> <sup>154</sup>	John Trenchard was a long-standing Member of Parliament representing Wareham in Dorset from 1621. His family were closely associated with the 4 <sup>th</sup> then the 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl of Bedford and Trenchard helped promote the 1649 Act of Drainage in Parliament. He purchased his first Adventurers land in 1650. He died in 1662.
<b>John Walker</b> <sup>154</sup>	John Walker was a member of the Company of Adventurers involved in the deployment of the Scottish soldiers. He was sent to York to make the choice of Scottish soldiers and make arrangements for their transfer to Peterborough. He also made the arrangements for the provision of soldiers to Jonas Moore.
<b>John Thurloe</b> <sup>154</sup>	Oliver St John sponsored Thurloe through Furnival's Inn and employed him as his personal assistant and agent. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1646 and held a government legal office from 1648. In 1650 he was made treasurer of the Company of Adventurers which he held until 1654. Between 1652 and 1658 he was Secretary of State and, therefore, at the centre of government. As Secretary of State he acted as an intermediary between the Company of Adventurers and Cromwell and the Council of State and helped organise the provision of troops to put down rioting against the loss of common land.
<b>Mr Robert Burton</b> <sup>140</sup>	Robert Burton of Spalding was resident engineer, first working alongside William Dodson in 1649 then Vermuyden after his appointment as Director of Works. He was involved in the organization of many aspects of the works, including management of the construction of the drains and banks. Although the Minute Books record several disputes with the Company, including the way sub-contractors were managed and paid, he continued to work for them until his death in 1653.
<b>Jonas Moore</b> <sup>154</sup>	Jonas Moore was appointed as surveyor of the Great Level on the 26 <sup>th</sup> August 1650 for a fee of £200 per year. His task was to provide an exact map of the Great Level to provide a sound basis for the engineering works and to mark out the lots so that the correct areas could be transferred and sold (accuracy in marking these areas was essential to avoid later disputes). He first became established as a mathematician and published a book called Arithmetik in 1649. Moore served four years in his role as surveyor and two further years as a surveyor of outfalls and sluices. He first published a small map of the Great Level in 1654, before producing the larger map in 1658. Although Jonas Moore attended only a few meetings of the Adventurers, his name is frequently mentioned in the minutes regarding the organisation of his survey work.

<b>John Kelsey</b>	John Kelsey was appointed as overseer of the Scottish soldiers on the 15 <sup>th</sup> October 1651. <sup>4</sup> On the 19 <sup>th</sup> November 1651 the Company minutes record that along with Provost Marshall Johnston he should also take care for retaking and prisoners who ran away so the justice should be done. His employment by the Company ceased in August 1652. He is described in the Minute Books as a carpenter and an engineer and a diligent and ingenious man. A reference to a Sergeant Kelsie is made in the Minute Books, although it is unclear if this is the same man (bearing in mind the different spelling).
<b>Mr Jessop<sup>138</sup></b>	Mr Jessop was the Company's accountant and was responsible for recording all financial transactions and the writing of lot books.
<b>Others</b>	Many other individuals made important contributions to the work of the Company of Adventurers, including Sir Miles Sandys, Richard Lord Gorges and Sir Edward Partheriche and several engineers who worked alongside Vermuyden and Burton. The individuals are not, however, mentioned further as there is no record of their being directly involved in the deployment and management of the Scottish soldiers.

Several of the drainage channels constructed during the works were named after individuals involved in the Company of Adventurers.<sup>138</sup> This accolade was presumably given to those who made important contributions to the works.

- Bedford Level – The expanse of the Fens drained in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking became known as the Bedford Level. This name is now less used, replaced by the Middle, North and South Levels.
- Vermuyden's Drain – currently better known as (part of) the Forty Foot Drain.
- Hammond's Eau – now a small drain west of the Sutton Gault causeway road.
- St John's Eau – The drain currently known as Downham Eau was originally intended to be named after Lord Justice Oliver St John but at the meeting of the Company on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1651 this was changed,<sup>138</sup> “*That a letter be written to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden that upon the motion of Mr Thurlow on behalf of the Lord Chief Justice St John that the name St John's Eau may be spared and some other name be given thereunto.*”
- Moore's Drain – currently known as the Twenty Foot Drain.
- Thurloe's Drain – currently the Sixteen Foot Drain.
- Henley's Eau.

### The Scottish soldiers

Information on the Scottish soldiers who fought at the battle of Dunbar has been provided by the forensic analysis of the skeletal remains of bodies buried in the mass grave in the grounds of Durham cathedral by Durham University.<sup>146</sup> This indicates that the soldiers were predominantly adolescents and young men between the ages of 18 and 25. Many had experienced poor health with evidence of poor nutrition and, in several individuals, this may have resulted in rickets and scurvy. Three quarters of the skeletons showed evidence of exposure to polluted air and physical wear of teeth was indicative of pipe smoking. There was limited evidence of substantial ante-mortem trauma that might have resulted from battle injuries although one of the soldiers showed an injury above the eye. This suggests that the soldiers in the mass grave had not been survivors of earlier battles such as Marston Moor, which is consistent with the historical evidence that the Scottish army was raised shortly before the conflict; inexperienced soldiers in contrast to Cromwell's army. Chemical analysis of the skeletal remains indicates that the soldiers were drawn from all over Scotland and a small number of individuals appear to have come from mainland Europe. In 1650 each Scottish county sherrifdom created a committee of war, answerable to the Scottish government, to raise manpower to create an army to fight Cromwell's parliamentary forces. Archival evidence indicates that many small regiments

were created, mainly from areas in the East and South of Scotland that supported the Covenant. Many experienced soldiers who had fought previously with Cromwell are believed to have refused to fight for the king, provoking one Scottish colonel to call it an army of "nothing but useless clerks and minister's sons who had never seen a sword, much less used one."

At the battle of Dunbar (3<sup>rd</sup> September), the Scottish army, led by David Leslie, outnumbered Cromwell's forces, with an estimated 3,000-4,000 cavalry and 9,500 infantry.<sup>146,152</sup> This compared to 3,500 horse and 7,500 foot in the English army. After the Scottish army gave up advantageous high ground, Cromwell split the Scottish horse and cavalry and quickly routed them in less than an hour, taking thousands of prisoners. Although some of the sick and injured prisoners were released, 4,000 were marched south into England. The soldiers, already believed to have been suffering from malnutrition before the battle, were not fed during the march and many collapsed before they reached Berwick, their first destination. Soldiers unable to march are believed to have been killed whilst others managed to escape. After stopping at Belwith, Morpeth and Newcastle, approximately 3,000 remaining soldiers reached Durham and were interned in Durham Cathedral. During their period of internment, in cold and insanitary conditions with a poor supply of food, many soldiers died, mainly of dysentery (known as "flux" at the time). By October 1650, 1,600 prisoners are believed to have died. The position of the skeletons indicated that bodies were thrown into the grave in a haphazard manner to dispose of them quickly. The last prisoners were released from the cathedral in July 1952, 22 months after their arrival.<sup>146</sup>

After the battle of Dunbar, the conflict between Parliamentary forces and the Scots continued and by the summer of 1651, Cromwell had manoeuvred the Scottish forces led by Charles II into a defensive position in Scotland.<sup>156</sup> Charles II decided that the only possible route to victory was to invade England and raise a larger army from the remaining Royalist supporters in West of England and Wales. Cromwell believed that this risk could be contained and, therefore, saw the invasion as a way to trap and finally rout the Royalist forces. The Scottish army was broader in make-up than the forces at Dunbar, including non-Covenanters (known as Engagers) and Catholics. The army was poorly equipped and tired even before they embarked on a 300-mile march down the western side of England in August 1651, harried and opposed by Parliamentary forces. The Scottish forces encamped in and around the city of Worcester, joined by a smaller force of Royalist English soldiers. The Royalist army of approximately 15,000 men was opposed by a better equipped army of Parliamentary forces of 30,000 men.

The battle of Worcester took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, on the outskirts and within the city walls of Worcester and resulted in an overwhelming victory for Parliament with many thousands of Scottish soldiers killed, the corpses of horses and men filling the streets and houses the city. Some of the Scottish cavalry escaped but were subsequently captured or killed on their route back to Scotland. It is estimated that up to 10,000 soldiers, in total, were captured. In contrast to Dunbar, these were dispersed to several locations in England including Shrewsbury, Stafford, Chester, Bristol, Nottingham and York.<sup>117</sup> The largest number of 4,000-6,000 prisoners were marched to London where prisoner of war camps were prepared in Tothill fields in Westminster and the grounds of Chelsea College of Theology. The long march to London of exhausted and injured men was similar in nature to the earlier march to Durham from the battle on Dunbar and many died on the road. A description of the marching prisoners by a Father Huddleston was of "all of the stript, many of them cut, some without stockings or shoes and scarce enough left on them to cover their nakedness, eating peas and handfuls of straw in their hands which they pulled from the fields as they passed."<sup>156</sup> The Scots were described in Heath's Chronicle<sup>160</sup> as being "driven like a herd of swine through Westminster to Tothill Fields". Once in the prison camps, starvation and disease continued to affect many more prisoners.

In contrast to the survivors from Durham, the soldiers from Worcester were transferred from the camps relatively quickly, the Council of State perhaps conscious of the fate of the Dunbar soldiers. A formal committee for the transportation of prisoners from Worcester was appointed on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1651.<sup>156</sup> Since the Scottish army that fought at Worcester was raised in a similar way to the forces at Dunbar, it is likely that they consisted of a similar group of young men, traumatised by battle, long marches and starvation.

The names of seven of the Scottish soldiers who worked in the Great Level are recorded in the Minute Books.

Name	Further information
<b>William Cristen</b>	Put into the service of the Adventurer Mr Trenchard in October 1651
<b>William Worley</b>	Put into the service of the Adventurer Mr Thurlow in October 1651
<b>James Cuthbert</b>	Intended to be put into the service of Thomas Challoner Esquire and Colonel Henry Martin but became sick so was returned to overseer John Kelsey. Later was recorded to have sent a letter to the Company whilst in the service of Colonel Martin and Thomas Challoner, concerning several undisclosed matters.
<b>Alexander (Sanders) MackDell</b>	Appointed as messenger to the Company to carry letters to and from the works. Is mentioned as late as October 1652 as being in the service of the Company.
<b>George Hume</b>	Mentioned as one of the soldiers encountered at Tothill Fields in October 1651 prior to his transfer to the Fens. Later he was allowed to return to Scotland in August 1652.
<b>James Hewston</b>	Allowed to return to Scotland in August 1652
<b>James Chiney</b>	A letter was written to the Company by his wife Bridget Chiney requesting easier work for her husband

### Other workers

Before the Scottish prisoners-of-war arrived in the Fens, many works had been completed in the northern part of the Great Level and on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1651, the 170,000 acres area to the north west of the Old Bedford River was judged to have been drained by the Commission of Adjudication in Peterborough.<sup>138</sup> This indicates that a large work force had been established before the arrival of the Scottish prisoners-of-war. A hundred commoners were reported to have ordered 1,000 workmen to abandon their work near Peterborough in April 1650<sup>155</sup> which also provides evidence that the Adventurers had a large workforce at the early stages of the works (Vermuyden was appointed Director of Works in January 1650). Some of this workforce is likely to have been transferred to the work on the Hundred Foot River before the Scottish soldiers arrived. In a journal entry in 1657,<sup>141</sup> William Dugdale observed that "no less than 11,000 men sometimes employed at worke, at a time building the new Bedford River."

These observations indicate that there was a large workforce employed on the Hundred Foot River; much larger in size than the deployment of Scottish soldiers. Little information survives on the make-up of this workforce. In his previous drainage works at Hatfield Chase, Vermuyden contracted many French and Flemish Huguenot and Dutch workers and after the resistance to the Hatfield project, many transferred to Cambridgeshire, creating colonies in Thorney and Whittlesea.<sup>138</sup> During his work as Director of Works under Charles I in 1638-1640, Vermuyden "inundated the country with foreign labourers whom he had called over from Holland".<sup>138</sup> Although recruitment of men from the Fens is believed to have been impaired by the opposition to the drainage works, there was ample opportunity to recruit men in the neighbouring counties and London. Samuel Wells in his history of drainage<sup>138</sup> indicates that Cornelius Vermuyden had access to what he describes as a "Legion of Workmen" and quantities of material already prepared before he was made Director of Works. In response to objections to the drainage works, the Company of Adventurers observed later that "thousands of poor [were] set on the works".<sup>141</sup>

Although the make-up of the workforce is not clear, it is likely to have been a diverse group of men of different nationalities and accents; in numbers comparable to the armies in the Civil War. Women were present in and around the camps, including the wives of the workers.<sup>41</sup>

### The local people

As in the rest of England, there were many levels in society in the Fens, ranging from people who led a hunter gatherer way of life to wealthy landowners. Many of these groups held mixed views on the works.<sup>155</sup> The commoners most likely to be harmed by the drainage works were people who owned small herds of cattle, moved to common land in the summer, supplementing their income by hunting, fishing and other Fenland activities such as cutting reed, sedge and turf. Others would have benefitted by a reduction in the disruptive effect of large-scale flooding. Some landowners thought drainage would increase the value of their land whilst others were wary, after previous failed drainage schemes had increased flooding and caused the loss of land to the banks and drains.

Many opposed the drainage works in Parliament, the Commissions of Sewers and by violent resistance. John Maynard was a leading objector to the drainage in Parliament and at the Commissions of Adjudication, supporting the rights of the commoners and contending that the common lands had been undervalued. Based on his estate at Isleham, on the edge of the Fens, he was accused of organising some of the local resistance, although it may be that he was regarded as a figurehead rather than being active in the disturbances.<sup>155</sup>

The Fenland rioters were often led by ringleaders with particularly strong views. Although many escaped prosecution because of the unwillingness by the local justices to arrest them, others were fined or sent to prison (e.g. The Fleet in London); severe penalties to low income workers who could not afford to be away from their families.<sup>155</sup> Women were involved in many of the riots, partly because they were less likely to be arrested and prosecuted than the men.<sup>59</sup> A local man called Billingham is mentioned in the Minute Books as "enticing away Scottish prisoners".<sup>74</sup>

### Management of the works

The drainage works were funded by the individuals in the Company of Adventurers by "taxation" of their lots of land. If they failed to pay these taxes, they would be in default and their lots sold by the Company to raise money and ensure future payment of taxes. Many demands for payment of taxes, defaults and exchanges of lots are recorded in the Minute Books. The latter resulted in a large changing group of Adventurers during the period when the drainage works were taking place.

Cornelius Vermuyden, the Director of Works, played the key role of designing the drainage works;<sup>138,150</sup> planning the location, design and size of the drains and banks and the development and design of sluices, sasses, tunnels and bridges. His technical abilities as an engineer appear to have been highly regarded by the Company and he continued in this role throughout the construction phase of the works despite there being many disagreements between them. On several occasions the Company complained that Vermuyden had interfered with the hiring and paying of workers, against the terms of their agreement with them.

The Earl of Bedford was the largest lot holder of the Company of Adventurers but during 1651 to 1652 attended only key meetings of the Company in Temple Bar in London. Several of the members of the Company were instructed to be resident on the works in the Fens and these members had a key role in hiring officers and organizing finances, including the payment of salaries. They also updated the members in London on progress with the works through regular correspondence, recorded in the Minute Books. The members resident in the Fens were given management roles, including Comptrol and Manager of Works and regular conflicts in responsibilities resulted between them and Vermuyden. Anthony Hamond and John Trenchard were key resident members during the period when the Scottish prisoners worked in the Fens.

The Company employed officers to manage the works who are listed in the Minute Books. For example, on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1652,<sup>116</sup> 17 officers are listed, including engineers, clerks, managers of contracts and

materials, overseers of the workmen, surveyors, solicitors and messengers as well as sluice keepers.

The labourers were managed through contracts, organised by the officers, the engineers and overseers who directed the day to day work, following the requirements drawn up by Vermuyden. Individuals called Takers by the Company acted as intermediaries in the hiring of labourers and the Company expressed concern on a number of occasions that they were taking an undue cut of the budget. The labourers were paid on fortnightly or monthly pay days.<sup>84,89,105</sup> Before completion, the construction works were inspected by the Company engineers and surveyors.

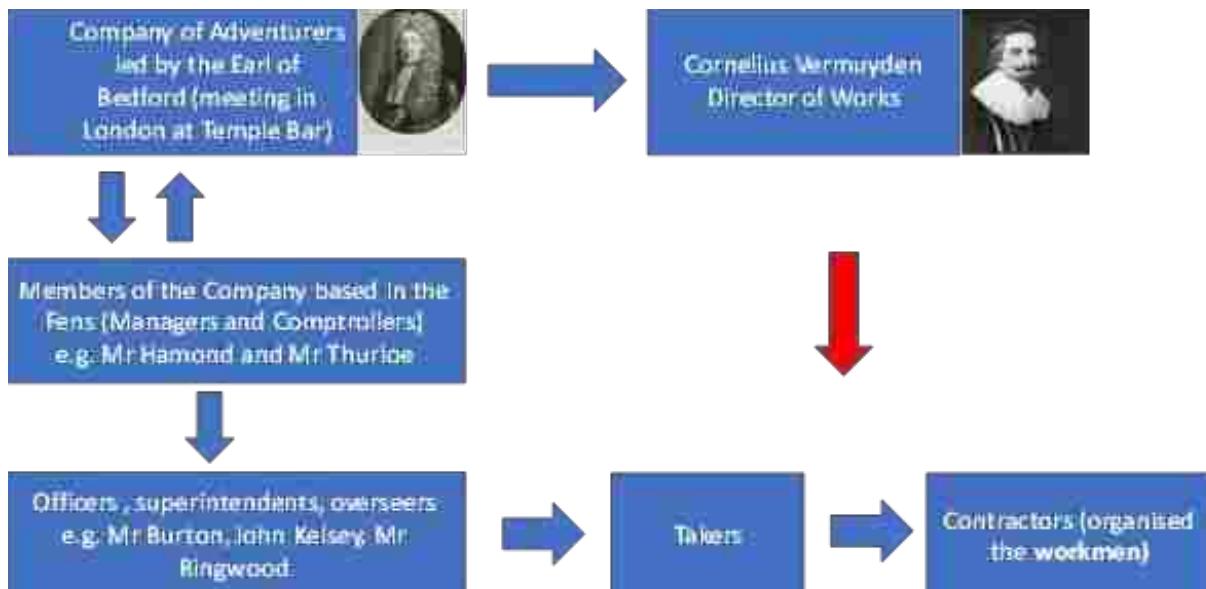


fig. 1.3

## The Scottish Soldiers in the Great Level

### Events before the transfer of the Scottish soldiers to the Great Level

Cornelius Vermuyden became Director of Works of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Undertaking on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1650, after protracted negotiations with the Company of Adventurers following the passage of the Act of Drainage in April 1649.<sup>138,150</sup> Some work, however, was carried out before his arrival, led by the engineer William Dodson; the Minute Books record the following dispute over payment of wages;<sup>138</sup>

"At a meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> of this month (October, 1649), I was commanded by them to acquaint you they have lately received letters from Colonel Castle and Lieutenant Colonel Dodson, that for want of moneye to pay the workmen they fall into mutinies and seize upon the officers and threaten to cary them away and cut them in pieces in case they have not speedy payment."

It is likely that the nature of this work was to restore the condition of the drainage works from the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking rather than begin new works.

Following Vermuyden's appointment as Director of Works, the work first focused on the area to the north of the Bedford River. This included raising the bank along the Bedford Ouse between Over and Earith, the construction of the Forty Foot (or Vermuyden's Drain) between the River Nene and Bedford River (approximately 20km), Hammonds Eau near Somersham, Stonea Drain near March, Moore's Drain (or the Twenty Foot River; 13km) near March, Thurlow's Drain or the Sixteen Foot River, extending from the Forty Foot to Popham's Eau (14km) as well as improvement works on Conquest Lode and Popham's Eau<sup>138</sup>. This was, therefore, an extensive programme of work, comparable in scale to the later works on the South Level

and the Hundred Foot River. On the 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1651 in Peterborough Minister Church, the Commission of Adjudication judged that 170,000 acres of land to the North of the Bedford River had been successfully drained and ownership of the agreed lands in this area could be transferred to the Adventurers. This was a critical moment for the Company of Adventures because it secured a large part of the benefits of the works and, therefore, put the venture on a sounder financial footing. Only then was attention be directed toward the South Level and construction of the Hundred Foot River.

Immediately after the adjudication, a General meeting of the Company of Adventurers was called to consider the state of drainage of the South Level and plan in greater detail the drainage of this area. Vermuyden proceeded to present his plans for the work, centred on the construction of the Hundred Foot River. The work also included raising the bank on the north side of the existing Old Bedford River to protect the Middle Level from flooding<sup>138</sup>.

The first record related to work on the Hundred Foot River was made in March 1651; Cornelius Vermuyden agreed "to take order for the lockspittinge all the South Side of Bedford river" before taking a 10 day leave of absence<sup>78</sup> (lockspitting is the digging of a narrow trench dug to mark out a boundary or to indicate lines of work in construction of civil engineering projects). The construction work seems to have begun by the 7<sup>th</sup> May<sup>80</sup> as on this date the Minute Books state "That the great banke of Bedford river being let out and began so that there is a necessity that it must be finished this Somer and also that there are certaine howses standing in and about Erith which by reason of the lyne already drawne and in regard of the works now in hand may come into damage and prejudice". The work was initially directed to construct the flood bank to the east of the Hundred Foot River to be completed by October when autumn flooding might impair the work. Progress with the work, however, was complicated by a dispute between the Company and Vermuyden regarding the deployment of workers.<sup>82,84,86,87</sup> The Company wanted effort to be directed towards completion of the work on the north side of the Bedford River (i.e. the Middle Level), including the raising of the north bank of the Old Bedford River and laying down of Division Dykes to mark the boundaries of the lots to allow the owners to begin farming, whereas Vermuyden preferred to focus on the Hundred Foot River. This dispute went on for many months with many entries in the minute book detailing instructions to Vermuyden to redirect the work north side of the Bedford River which he appears to have repeatedly ignored. By July, the dispute had escalated to the point that the Company refused to pay the workers for any more than limited work on the south side, with the rest to be ordered on pay day to move to the north side. Vermuyden, however, continued to direct work toward the south side and at the end of August 1651 the Company refused to allocate any further money for this work. Eventually it seems progress on the north side of the Bedford River occurred and at the end of September the Company<sup>87</sup> "order[ed] that the works on the south side of Bedford river bee forthwith taken in hand and in particular that the workmen employed in bottoming the new river to begin at first which a peece of that river that is to say from Salters Load as high as Welch his dam and afterwards to be employed on the other works on the south side of the Bedford river".

Progress with the work on the channel and banks of the Hundred Foot River before the first prisoners arrived in October is uncertain but it seems much of the initial earth moving work was complete.

### **Arrangements for the transfer of Scottish prisoners to the Great Level**

Several reasons can be offered to explain the transfer of Scottish prisoners of war to work on the Great Level. The primary reason is likely to have been the government's need to dispose of the large number of prisoners in a way that avoided the risk of them regrouping to renew resistance against the Commonwealth. Dealing with prisoners-of-war was fraught with difficulties as demonstrated by the events at Durham. Looking after a large numbers of prisoners was expensive and disruptive to the local communities and could easily result in atrocities and death due to starvation and illness. Cromwell was aware of the potential problems from an early stage when he wrote, shortly after the battle of Dunbar,<sup>146</sup> "We can find no way how to dispose of these prisoners that will be consisting with these two ends to wit, the not losing them and not the starving of them, neither of which we will willingly incur". To deal with the problem the Council of State set up a Committee of Examinations to consider the disposal of the prisoners.

From the perspective of the Adventurers, offering to take some of the soldiers would help further garner support from the government at a time when they faced uncertainties regarding the success of the project.

The Scottish prisoners also offered a cheap labour force at a time when there were constant problems with funding the work. It partly solved the problem of creating a large flexible workforce in an area of low population, many of whom were against the drainage works.

It is probable that the Adventurer, Lord Oliver St John, played a key role in enabling the transfer of prisoners to the Fens.<sup>1</sup> As Lord Chief Justice, he would have had the ear of Cromwell and the Council of State.

The first mention of the Scottish prisoners-of-war in the Minute Books was on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1651<sup>11</sup> about a month after the battle of Worcester. An order was first made by the Council of State for the transfer of the Scottish prisoners from Tothill Fields and York on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1651<sup>12</sup> followed by further orders related to Durham.<sup>120</sup>

The government and the Adventurers clearly recognised that employing large numbers of alien prisoners-of-war, who had fought against the current regime, was not without risk and this concern is evident in the Minute Books. A provost marshal called Johnston<sup>3</sup> and guards were appointed to control the prisoners. They were also to be dressed in white kersey cloth to make them distinct from the other workers.<sup>27</sup> The prisoners were to be paid a small sum to reduce resentment against their forced labour.<sup>2</sup> The Company agreed with the Council of State to be fined if they failed to control the prisoners (if greater than ten percent escaped north of the River Trent<sup>2</sup> or if they acted in any way prejudicial to the state). The Council of State also required that the Company should keep a record of any escapes and deaths amongst the prisoners and report this to the Council on a monthly basis. It is also clear from later entries in the Minute Books that the government also offered to support the transfer of prisoners and wider security of the project by quartering soldiers in the Fens to be called on as requested by the Company when problems arose.<sup>89,102</sup>

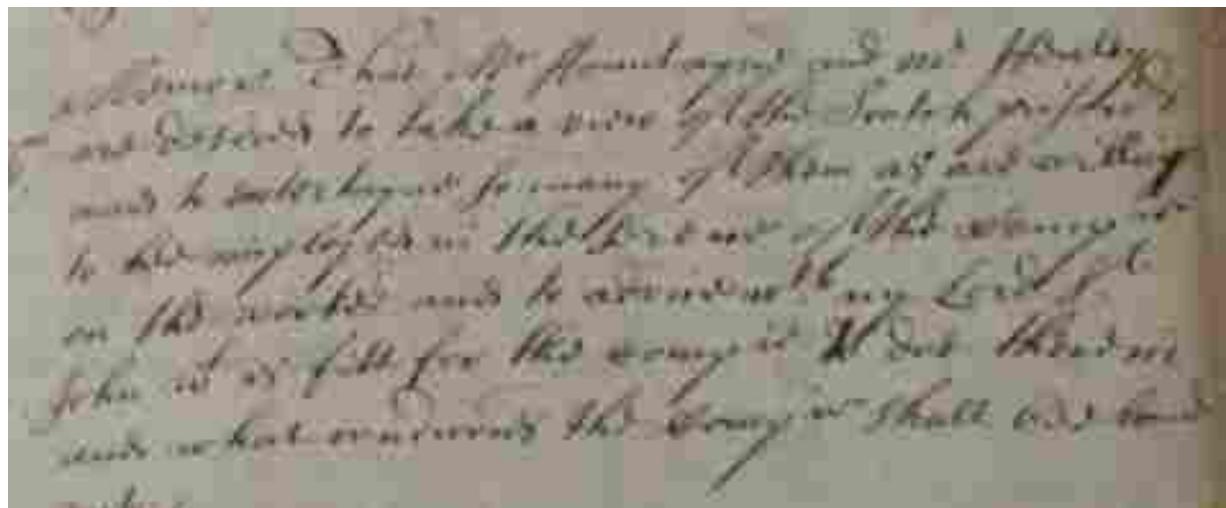


fig. 1.4

In addition, an overseer, John Kelsey was appointed to keep control of the prisoners with a weekly salary of ten shillings and sixpence.<sup>4</sup>

Practical arrangements were also made before the prisoners arrived; the provision of clothing and shoes (it is probable that when they arrived, they were still wearing the same clothes as on the day of the Battle of Worcester). This included an order of 666 yards of white kersey to make clothes for the service of the Scottish prisoners.<sup>27</sup> Arrangements were also made for caps, shoes (sizes 12, 13 and 14) and stockings to be provided to the works.<sup>28</sup>

## The transfer of the Scottish prisoners

### Tothill Fields London

The first prisoners to arrive in the Fens were transferred from the Tothill Fields prisoner-of-war camp in London.<sup>5,31,118,119</sup> Before their transfer to the Fens, the prisoners were inspected at Tothill Fields and a list made of those fit for work in mid-October 1651. A later reference to a meeting “at the church nere Tothill fields” was made in the Minute Books on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, related to a dispute about the clothing the prisoners wore.<sup>31</sup> After their long march from Scotland, engagement at the battle of Worcester, subsequent march to London then containment in an overcrowded insanitary prisoner-of-war camp, many of the prisoners must have been in a very poor state of health. Selecting the prisoners in the best state of health was, therefore, of great importance for the Company to avoid ill health and disease amongst their workforce and to ensure they would be effective workers.

A warrant for the transfer of prisoners was signed by Lord Chief Oliver St John. Major Miller of Colonel Baxter’s regiment<sup>3</sup> identified John Johnston to take the care of the Scottish prisoners during their transfer from Tothill Fields to Earith, the cost of which was covered by the Company of Adventurers. The Company ordered their officers, Thomas Bunbury and Hugh Farnham, to receive 165 prisoners at Earith from a Corporal Foster, provide a receipt for those that arrived and pay a gratuity of 40 shillings to the Corporal.<sup>4</sup> The latter order was made on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October and it is, therefore, likely that they arrived shortly afterwards.

### York

Arrangements for the transfer of prisoners from York were made in mid-October 1651. These prisoners are likely to have been captured during the Worcester campaign, perhaps at the battles that occurred during their march from Scotland before the battle of Worcester (including the battle of Wigan<sup>156</sup>) and later when they fled back toward Scotland. The latter may have included General Leslie’s cavalry that failed to fully engage with Cromwell’s forces on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Council of State papers of the 13<sup>th</sup> September<sup>117</sup> mention that York had received prisoners who had escaped from Worcester.

Thomas Bunbury, the company officer involved in the transfers of prisoners from Tothill Fields was ordered to<sup>5</sup> “repayre to Yorke, and apply himself to the commander of the guard of Scottish prisoners there, and to desire to see them drawne forth, and, thereby to informe himself how many able persons there are of them hayle and sound, without wives, and willing and accustomed to labour”. Again, the importance of ensuring the prisoners were healthy is clear, but, in this case, it is also stated that they should not have wives, perhaps to avoid the complications of the prisoners being followed by the families. It was also ordered that a letter be written to the Commissioner at York, to send the selected prisoners Peterborough to then be received by Thomas Bunbury. Mr Walker, one of the Adventurers, was also instructed to go to exercise governance over Thomas Bunbury, in the choice of the Scottish prisoners.<sup>5</sup>

Mr Walker arrived in York in late October 1651 and the minutes on the 14<sup>th</sup> November refer to a letter from him to the Company, related to the transfer of the prisoners and the purchase of shoes and stockings before commencing their march south.<sup>10,11</sup> Mr Walker was asked to make the required payments to be reimbursed later by the Company.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> November the Minute Books mention that the Company was informed that 210 prisoners were marching from York to Peterborough and were expected to arrive by the 30<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>11</sup> A letter was then sent by Mr Walker on the 28<sup>th</sup> November from Grantham that the prisoners were shortly to arrive at Peterborough.<sup>12</sup>

After their arrival at Peterborough, they were to be transferred by Thomas Bunbury to the drainage works.

### Nottingham

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 1651, there is a further entry in the Minute Books<sup>6</sup> related to prisoners from the battle

of Worcester that were held at Nottingham. "Motion was made that the Companie would entertayne some Scottish prisoners that are now at Nottingham, and they shall be delivered at Erith, without charge to the Companie". No further reference is made to these prisoners and it is therefore uncertain whether the transfer took place.

### Durham

Shortly after the battle of Dunbar in September 1650, Cromwell wrote that some of the prisoners might be sent "to Lynn, some to Chester" so the possibility of deploying the prisoners in the Fens was considered long before their transfer.<sup>145</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1651 an order was made by the Council of State:<sup>120</sup> "The Scottish prisoners at Newcastle or Durham to be sent to Lynn, and delivered to the Adventurers for draining the fens, upon the same terms as those at London and York, and they to give their answer within three or four days whether they will accept them".

No specific mention is made in the Minute Books of the prisoners in Durham until the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1651,<sup>13</sup> "to get 500 Scotch prisoners from Durham to bee send to Lynne according to the order lately made at the Councell of State". On the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1652,<sup>14</sup> Mr Say, one of the Adventurers, was ordered to speak to Sir Arthur Hasselrig (Governor of Newcastle) to request a warrant for the transfer of the prisoners. This warrant was to be issued to Mr Walker who would then select prisoners and make arrangements for their transfer to the Fens, as he had done at York.

A further order was made by the Company on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March<sup>16</sup> to Mr Walker "to go to Durham and make choice of all such Scotch prisoners as are hayle and sound and fitt for labour to bee employed in the service of the Companie as soon as the Companie have obteyned a warrant for the purpose under the hand of Sir Arthur Hasilrigge". Later, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1652,<sup>17</sup> a further order from the Company stated that "as soone as Mr Say have procured a warrant under the hand and seale of Sir Arthur Hasselrigge that Mr Walker is hereby desired to repaire to Durham and there make choice of such Scotch prisoners as he shall finde hayle and sounde to bee drawne out for the use and service of the Companie". No other references to the Durham prisoners in the Minute Books are made.

A number of possibilities arise from this information. The requests for a warrant in March and May may have been related to further transfers of prisoners (i.e. after January). Another possibility, is that the Company delayed the transfer because they had other priorities or that conditions to progress the work were poor in the winter. Alternatively, Arthur Haselrig may have delayed issuing the warrant, perhaps because of the poor condition of the prisoners in Durham (finding 500 healthy prisoners to send to the Fens, a project highly regarded and scrutinised by the Council of State, may have been difficult which would have highlighted his failings in the management of the prisoners in Durham). The possibility, therefore, cannot be ruled out that despite the intention to do so, no prisoners, in the end, were transferred from Durham to the Fens. Bearing in mind the complexities and financial requirements of arranging transfers of prisoners, and difficulties the Company had faced dealing with the Worcester prisoners, it seems unlikely that any such arrangements would have gone unmentioned in the Minute Books (many details are given regarding the transfer of Worcester and Dutch prisoners but none related to the Durham prisoners). The level of detail in the Minute Books is, however, at times patchy; for example, there is very little information on the departure of the soldiers from the Fens. Samuel Wells' 1830 *History of the Bedford Level*<sup>138</sup> identifies Dunbar as the source of the Scottish prisoners but makes no reference to Worcester.

Council of State papers indicate that on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1652,<sup>124</sup> Sir Arthur Haselrig ordered that all the Scotch prisoners under the degree of captain, who were not highlanders, should be discharged from Durham and given passes to return to Scotland. This order was, however, rescinded on the 17<sup>th</sup> March<sup>125</sup> such that the detainment of prisoners should be continued (perhaps because this order contradicted the earlier order for the transfer of the prisoners to the Fens). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1652,<sup>127</sup> a further order was made that: "The

private Scotch soldiers, prisoners at Durham and Gloucester, to be released, and permitted to return to their own country".

### **Further transfers**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> November,<sup>8</sup> after the arrival of soldiers from London but before the arrival of prisoners from York, the following entries to the Minute Books were made:

"A question beinge putt whether or not, the Companie will have any more Scotch workemen employed on the workes, it was resolved in the affirmative."

"Another question being also put, how many more shall be employed, it was resolved there should bee as many more employed as will make up those now employed a thousand Scotch workemen."

The Company, therefore, clearly wanted to increase its workforce, but they may also have wanted to ascertain how manageable and useful the soldiers were before bringing in large numbers. This may explain why the total recorded numbers arriving in the Fens was only 375 soldiers. Whether further transfers occurred, in addition to those recorded in the Minute Books is unknown. Once the arrangements for transfers were established, further transfers may have occurred but not been recorded. Generally the Minute Books, however, contain a high, albeit somewhat patchy, level of detail of the Company's proceedings and meetings were held every two or three days. Any transfers of prisoners would have entailed additional cost, risked disorder and required arrangements to be made with the army to transfer the prisoners.

### **Dutch prisoners**

Dutch prisoners-of-war arrived in the Fens in June 1653<sup>22,23,24</sup> to begin service for the Company of Adventurers, following their capture at the battle of Goodwin Sands in May 1652. The first mention of the possibility of transferring Dutch prisoners took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1653<sup>18</sup> and agreement was gained from the Council of State on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1653<sup>20</sup> to arrange their transfer to King's Lynn which finally took place in June 1653<sup>24</sup> when shoes, shovels, tents, spades and huts were prepared for their arrival. They transferred to Ely and began to work for the Company in July 1653.<sup>26</sup>

### **Arrangements for the Scottish soldiers' stay in the Great Level**

Before their arrival in the Fens, arrangements were made to clothe the Scots prisoners,<sup>2,29,30,32,33</sup> with boots,<sup>28</sup> stockings, caps,<sup>28</sup> shirts<sup>34,36</sup> and overgarments made of kersey<sup>27</sup> cloth which were first sent to Cambridge.<sup>30</sup> In making these provisions the Company was conscious to reduce costs; for example, buying shoes in Wisbech which was known to be a cheap place.<sup>33</sup> There is a record in the Minute Books on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1651 that some of the Scots prisoners complained about the discomfort of wearing the clothes and disliked the white colour despite the Company stating that they had been pleased with them when consulted at Tothill Fields in London before being transferred to the Fens.<sup>31</sup> The Company asked for names of the prisoners who complained with a view to sending them away for not being fit servants on the works.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> January 1652 there is mention that the prisoners were unfurnished and destitute of clothes and a further 256 shirts and 128 suits and stockings were ordered.<sup>35,36,38</sup> This suggests that the earlier transfers of soldiers continued to be clothed inadequately, or that their clothing had fallen into disrepair. Alternatively, the provision may have been related to the planned transfers of prisoners from Durham.

The Minute Books make few references to the accommodation arrangements for the prisoners. On the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1652, however, it records that money was due for payment of the soldiers' lodgings.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that the prisoners were billeted in existing buildings such as barns, rather than in an encampment, following the practice for housing soldiers in the Civil War, although it would have been important to avoid the need to move prisoners a large distance to the works each day. Later, the Minute Books in 1653 record that Dutch prisoners were housed in huts and tents as well as other lodgings.<sup>22</sup> Temporary lodgings such as tents would clearly be valuable when moving workers across the large extent of the Fens to different parts of the works.

Another insight into the domestic arrangements for the Scots prisoners is provided by an entry in the Minute Books on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1652<sup>41</sup> that several of the Scots women were “bigge with child, amongst the workmen”. This suggests that some of the wives of the Scots prisoners followed their husbands to the Fens (alternatively local women may have been described as Scots once married to Scotsmen). Later, in September 1652, a Scots wife called Bridget Chiney is recorded to have written to the Company to ask if her husband, James Chiney, one of the Scots prisoners, could be transferred to less arduous work.<sup>57</sup>

The Council of State papers state<sup>121</sup> that “an allowance of 2½ d a day was to be provided to prisoners at Yorke or any other place, provided they be not made over to merchants”. There are also several references in the Minute Books to allowances made to the prisoners. When the initial arrangements for the transfer of prisoners were being made, the Minute Books note<sup>2</sup> that “receiving reward from us for their labour they might have just cause to blesse God for the parliamentary mercy to them by order from the Counsell of State”.

In May 1652, the Company ordered that a warrant be made by the Companie expenditor for money for the soldier’s lodgings like the usual one made for their pay.<sup>40</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1652 it was decided by the Company to increase the wages of the prisoners to encourage them to go on with their work rather than try to escape<sup>73</sup> (the alternative considered was to remove them from the hardest work).

Before their arrival in the Fens, the prisoners suffered from the trauma of battle, were forced on long marches and imprisoned in insanitary, cold conditions. During much of this time they were close to starvation. Although only relatively healthy prisoners were selected to be sent to the Fens, many must have been in a dreadfully poor state of health, only then to face the arduous work in the cold, damp and wet conditions on the drainage works. There is, however, little record in the Minute Books of loss of prisoners due to the poor health and none through death. One record of illness is related to the Scots prisoner, Ben Cuthbert,<sup>43,44</sup> who was due to be transferred to a landowner in the Fens but this was postponed because of illness. Later there is reference to a Scots prisoner<sup>37</sup> “whose feete begin to rott”, presumably due to constant exposure to waterlogged ground much like trench foot in the First World War. The Company considered sending him to Cambridge or London for treatment. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, illness and death, were much more a part of day-to-day life than they are today, and it may not have been noteworthy.

### **The work undertaken by the Scottish soldiers**

On arrival, it was intended that the Scots prisoners would first be deployed on the north side of the Bedford River,<sup>3</sup> following the long standing desire by the Company that the drainage work should be directed to this area to address outstanding problems with the banks and sluices and dig the Division Dykes that set the boundaries of the Adventurers’ land. These activities were a pre-requisite to their farming the drained land. For much of the summer, their proposed work on the north side had conflicted with Cornelius Vermuyden’s deployment of resources on the large drainage works on the south side and the building of the Hundred Foot River.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651, however, the Scots prisoners were set upon “bottoming” the New Ouse of the Hundred Foot River.<sup>45</sup> The activity of “bottoming” a river or drain is referred to many times in the minute book<sup>47,87,89,93,96,97,101,103,105,107,109,111,112</sup> but there is little information on what this entailed. It is likely, however, to have been the task of making the drain ready to convey water once it had been dug. This is likely to have included lining the drain with clay, removing debris such as bog oak and ensuring the banks were stable. This would have been particularly important for a new river such as the Hundred Foot River that would receive rapid flow, because the soft peat banks would rapidly erode (this would be less important in drains with slow flowing water such as most of the drains in the Fens). If the description is correct, “bottoming” would be extremely arduous work. Bottoming of the Hundred Foot River took much longer than planned, with several delays in the completion of this work recorded in the Minute Books,<sup>94,96,101,105,107,109</sup> taking until July 1652<sup>112</sup> before the river was ready to run. The prisoners also worked on raising and repairing the north and south banks of the Ouse Washes.

Later in August 1652, the Scots prisoners were set to repairing the north bank of the Old Bedford River between Earith and Mepal.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to working on the large drainage works, the Scots prisoners were hired out to landowners to hassock<sup>47,49,51</sup> their land (at a rate of 6 shillings per acre). This included the land lots taken by Adventurers including Anthony Hamond and Cornelius Vermuyden<sup>51</sup> who were required to pay the Company at the same rates. Hassocking involved cutting away the existing fen vegetation, for example, sedges, reeds and hassocks of grass to expose the peat soil; the first step in transforming the wild fen into farmland.

Several prisoners were transferred to work for private individuals. The Adventurers, Mr Trenchard and Mr Trafford, took two Scots prisoners, William Cristen and William Worley<sup>42</sup>, respectively, in October 1651. The Scots prisoner, James Cuthbert was transferred to Thomas Challoner and Colonel Marten, although this was delayed by illness.<sup>44</sup> On the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1652, it was ordered that Lord Oliver St John could choose 20 Scots prisoners to be employed in his service.<sup>54</sup>

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1652<sup>55</sup> it was ordered by the Company that "all such Scottish prisoners as are now employed in the workes of the Great Levell of the Fennes shall bee divided amongst the Companie of Adventurers according to the twenty Lotts or Shares and Lotts are to bee drawne for them and it is further ordered that Mr Hamond bee desired to take care to see there bee an iquall and indifferent division made according to the aforesaid twenty lotts or shares". This suggests that from this point on, the prisoners were employed directly by the Adventurers, perhaps on work such as hassocking and digging of Division Dykes although this does not necessarily mean that they were immediately separated, just that they could be deployed in this way if required.

In general, the Scots prisoners appear to have been a flexible workforce that could be moved between tasks and locations, in contrast to the general workforce who were hired to work on specific contracts. Some prisoners were, however, allocated to particular roles, including four prisoners who were transferred to assist Jonas Moore,<sup>48</sup> the surveyor, to help "in rowing and carrying chayne and other employment". Two Scots prisoners were selected to act as messengers for the Company, carrying messages across the level and between the Adventurers. One of these messengers, Alexander MackDell is mentioned in the Minute Books on several occasions<sup>46,50,58</sup> and was trusted to such a degree that he travelled between the Fens and the Company meeting place in London. He was paid an allowance for clothes and shoes and was provided with a bed and bedding. It seems he continued to work for the Company after the other prisoners had departed.<sup>58</sup>

### **Running away and disorder**

The Council and State and the Company of Adventurers recognised there were risks associated with transferring a large number of potentially hostile Scottish soldiers into a wild area where it might be difficult to maintain order and prevent escapes. To ensure that measures were taken to keep the prisoners under control, the Company was to be fined<sup>3</sup> if more than ten percent escaped (to north of the River Trent) and in return the Council of State agreed support from the army in transferring the prisoners, providing a provost marshall and guards and maintaining garrisons of soldiers in the Fens who could be directed to the drainage works if problems arose. The soldiers also helped control opposition by local people. Following the first transfer of prisoners from London but before the second transfer from Yorke took place, the following Parliamentary order was made on the 18<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>122</sup>

"That such [Scots Prisoners] who have been placed or disposed of by the Parliament or Council of State, or by their Authority, or by any of the Officers of the Army, as have, or shall run away from the Places where they are so disposed, or go into Scotland without Leave or Licence had from the Parliament, or Authority under the Parliament, shall suffer Death, and shall be proceeded against by Martial Law, and punished with Death; And that Mr. Solicitor-General do prepare and bring in an Act to that Purpose."

This order was noted in the Minute Books on the following day,<sup>66</sup> "There is an order of Parliament made this

daie, that it is death without mercy for any of the Scots which run awaie, and it is now printing, and it shall be sent to you by next; and the Company expect that Kelsey and the provost marshall, Johnston, take care of retaking such as are or shall run away, that justice may be done."

This order may have been promoted by members of the Company in parliament because on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1652<sup>73</sup> there is an entry in the Minute Books that the Company agreed to seek to obtain further orders from the Council of State and Parliament for measures to prevent escapes. It may also have been prompted by the first report to the Company (also to be issued to the Council) on the 14<sup>th</sup> November that seven prisoners had run away in the two weeks following their arrival on the works.<sup>64</sup>

The Company also ordered that 500 copies of the order of Parliament to be printed and be distributed around the Great Level and put up at convenient places in every town which was paid for by the Company.<sup>67</sup> A further order<sup>68</sup> was planned to "punish all [locals] who receive, retyne or entertayne them [i.e. the Scottish prisoners]".

Despite these efforts, keeping the prisoners under control and preventing their escape seems to have been an ongoing problem throughout their stay. The Company intended to make clear to the remaining prisoners that the escapees would be pursued and the law applied strictly without mercy. They ordered an investigation into the actions of the provost marshall, John Johnston, to determine if he had been negligent in allowing an escape and in failing to pursue the prisoners and to send him for court martial if he had been found to have failed in his duties. Alongside the overseer John Kelsey, he was ordered a week later to pursue the escapees with "Hue and Cry" to apprehend them so that they could be punished.<sup>64</sup> On the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1652,<sup>72</sup> the Company thanked the army for the justice done to one of the Scots prisoners (presumably a captured escapee) whilst Johnston was confined to be tried. On the 21<sup>st</sup> January the Company considered moving Johnston to be tried for his life at a Court of War<sup>73</sup> but postponed the decision on how to proceed against him.

These records indicate that the Company were determined to enforce the law with regard to prisoner escapes. This also applied to resistance and rioting against the drainage works by the locals; setting examples of the perpetrators so that it would not be repeated.

A further reference is made to the escape of prisoners on the 21<sup>st</sup> January<sup>73</sup> that the Company "feare there hath not byn that care used in keeping of them nor in pursuing after them when they are run away as should have byn". Another is made on the 4<sup>th</sup> February<sup>74</sup> about someone called Billingham, presumably a local man, who had enticed prisoners to escape. Several reminders were issued to John Kelsey to provide further lists<sup>40,60,73</sup> of prisoners as required each month by the Council of State.

Even if the Scots prisoners had managed to escape from their guards, they would then have been faced with making their way across the wild Fens. In the winter, in particular, this would have been dangerous because it was full of boggy land, mires, creeks and ponds with no dry place to rest or sleep. Wading through cold water and getting lost, there was a great risk of dying from exposure. Alternatively, they would have had to make their way along the roads and face the risk of getting caught.

### **Departure from the Great Level**

The departure of the Scots prisoners from the drainage works was a consequence of the changing political situation between England and Scotland. The Battle of Worcester ended the Civil War and the conflict with Scotland effectively came to an end. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1652, an Act of Parliament incorporated Scotland into one Commonwealth with England and abolished the king's power in Scotland.<sup>126</sup> Following this, Arthur Haselrig moved to release prisoners from Durham on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1652<sup>124</sup> which was delayed<sup>125</sup> but then put into effect in July 1652.<sup>127</sup> Prisoners in other camps such as at Gloucester were also released. The Company of Adventurers with their connections in Parliament must have been fully aware of these developments and in August<sup>77</sup> the guards were removed from the works and many Scots then ran away. John Kelsey was

interviewed at Cambridge by the Company at this time<sup>114</sup> about how the Scots prisoners had been deployed and to resolve some outstanding issues at the works. Shortly afterwards he is no longer listed as an officer of the Company,<sup>116</sup> despite being included in previous lists. An overseer of the prisoners was no longer required.

After this, there are no further mentions of the Scots prisoners in the Minute Books, apart from repairs to the bank on the 14<sup>th</sup> August<sup>56</sup> and a letter from one of the prisoner's wives to the Company in September.<sup>57</sup> Alexander MackDell, the messenger, is mentioned later in the Minute Books and appears to have continued to work for the Company.<sup>58</sup>

The nature of the departure of the Scots prisoners from the drainage works is, therefore, uncertain.

### **The Scottish soldiers after their work in the Great Level came to an end**

Little is known about Scottish prisoners who may have stayed in the Fens. Samuel Wells in his history of the drainage of the Great Level<sup>138</sup> states "that many of the prisoners settled in the Fens and were the origin of most of the Scottish families and names that exist in the Great Level. They were and still are excellent workmen; inoffensive in their manner; in their habits sober, industrious and indefatigable". Wells published his history in 1830 and at this time was over 60 years old. His personal memories of the Fens (he was born in Chatteris) and of others around him went back to the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century, about a 100 years after the transfer of Scots prisoners to the Fens. The prisoners were mostly in their late teens and early twenties, so some may have lived for another 50 years until the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In an area with a strong oral storytelling tradition it seems reasonable to believe his statement was true.

Tracing ancestry back to the Scottish prisoners is problematic because so few of their names survive. Other Scots came into the Fens to assist with the harvest in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and many more in the Victorian era when movement of people greatly increased with the railways.

## **The Drainage Works**

### **The construction works**

The Minute Books record that the course of the Hundred Foot River was marked out on the ground in March 1651.<sup>78</sup> The next stages would have been to cut away the surface vegetation, dig the channel and use the spoil to start the construction of the flood bank to protect the south level to the east. This appears to have occurred throughout the summer before the Scots prisoners arrived on the works. Jonas Moore's map of the Great Level indicates that most of the route of the Hundred Foot River passed through the open area of Westmore intercommon although in the southern part of the works, it ran across small plots, close to Earith, Haddenham and Cawcroft. Areas called Byall Fenn, east of Ely and Sedge Fenn toward Denver, may, from their names, have been the wettest areas.<sup>154</sup>



fig. 1.5

The number of men deployed in this activity is unknown, although Dugdale states that 11,000 men worked on the Hundred Foot River<sup>141</sup> which, if correct, is likely to have occurred in 1651/2 when most of the work was carried out (information on the construction works during this period is complicated by the dispute between Vermuyden and the Company, regarding where the workers should be deployed; the Hundred Foot River or the Middle Level<sup>82,84,86,87</sup>). Based on the length of the Hundred Foot River of 33.6km, a width of 30m and an average depth of 2-3m<sup>89</sup> (across the width of the channel), the total volume of material that was excavated was approximately 3 million m<sup>3</sup> (the Environment Agency provided an estimate of the current volume of the Hundred Foot River of 3.5 million m<sup>3</sup>; for comparison the volume of the Great Pyramid in Egypt is 2.6 million m<sup>3</sup>). The Minute Books of the Company of Adventurers indicate that the digging of the channel was carried out between April and September 1651 (a period of approximately 150 days). Once the surface vegetation was dug away, peat would have been a relatively easy material to dig and turf cutters could dig up to 10m<sup>3</sup> per day in good conditions.<sup>144</sup> Taking into account variable weather conditions and that other substrates, including gravels and clay, would have been found, an average rate of 5m<sup>3</sup> per day per man is reasonable. This equates to 600,000 man days requiring a workforce of 4,000 men to dig the channel over this period.

In addition to digging the channel, other workmen would have been required to shift the excavated material to the banks, arrange the planks, shift materials from elsewhere to strengthen the banks, dewater the channel and construct structures such as dams, sluices and sasses. The Company allocated £5,000 per week for work on 1,800 rods (9,050m) of the construction of the Hundred Foot River in July 1651<sup>84</sup> which at a pay rate of between 10 to 16d per day<sup>105</sup> per worker equates to a workforce of up to 2,000 men (assuming payment of workers made up all of the cost). Vermuyden, however, did not restrict the work to this section of the river during much of the summer (the £5,000 allocation is based on most of the workers moving to the Middle Level) so the workforce on the Hundred Foot River must, at times, have been considerably larger than this. Expenditure on the labour force is believed to have reached £8,000 per week at times and the overall costs in the three years between the commencement of the work and final adjudication was in excess of £300,000 with labour costs making up the most of this amount.<sup>141</sup> Combining this information, a workforce of 11,000 workers described by Dugdale seems reasonable; similar is scale to armies raised in the Civil War. This number of workers equates to an average of one worker for each 3m bank of river, which suggests the workforce was distributed along the entire length of the Hundred Foot River in 1651/52 which is consistent with the remarkably short period over which the excavation of the river was carried out.

Similarly large groups of manual labourers were deployed to work on similar channels such as the Middle Level Drain and great canals in the Victorian period. The digging phase of the work was largely complete before the Scottish soldiers arrived in the Fens.

The logistics of deploying so many men along the 21-mile length of the channel could not have been straightforward. If the men had to travel a long way each morning from their lodgings and return in the evening, this would have greatly reduced the amount of work they could complete in a day. This problem would have been reduced if lodgings were distributed along the villages close to the Hundred Foot River (Earith, Sutton, Mepal, Welney, Denver). Housing the Scots prisoners in lodgings<sup>46</sup> is mentioned in the Minute Books but there is no record of where they stayed. Moving workers by barge along the Old Bedford River might have been a means to move them to the construction sites more quickly.

During the summer, the workmen may have slept in tents close to the works, for example for hassocking work in the Fens (tents are mentioned in the Minute Books in relation to the later Dutch prisoners<sup>22</sup>).

The excavation of the drains was carried out using spades,<sup>22</sup> wheelbarrows<sup>79, 80</sup> and planks.<sup>72</sup> These were stored in a stone house at Salters Lode but problems still occurred with the theft of these items.<sup>79</sup> The scene may have been similar to the photograph opposite (fig1.6) of drainage works in the Victorian period when the work was likewise carried out by manual labour, using wheelbarrows and spades. Another method proposed by members of the Company was to use of wicker baskets to move the earth; as carried out in Norfolk.<sup>80</sup>



fig. 1.6

Following the excavation of the channel, before diverting the water from the River Ouse into the Hundred Foot River, the channel and bank would have required stabilisation because the peat would have eroded easily once exposed to a fast river flow. Presumably, a harder, less eroding substrate such as clay was applied (possibly gravel at the base of the channel). This work, described as "bottoming" in the Minute Books was carried out between September 1651 and June 1652 and took far longer than expected, causing concern from the Company.<sup>92,93,94,94,96,101,105,107,109</sup> It is likely to have been a key part of the work of the Scottish soldiers, hard work shifting wheelbarrow loads of clay along planks into the channel and spreading it out across the channel and bank. This material would have needed to have been transported from outside the area and Vermuyden is believed to have used material from the "high land of Over" (south of Earith).<sup>147</sup> Other deposits of clay were available closer to the works, such as at Sutton (Sutton Gault Pits). The deployment of barges, possibly along the Forty Foot Drain to the west and River Ouse would have helped to transport of such large volumes of material. The workers may, in places, have encountered marine clay at the bottom the channel. Although this could have been used for bottoming the drains, the depth of the peat was 4-5m at the time<sup>164</sup> so the deposits may not have been reached.

Another problem they may have encountered was unearthing bog oak, massive tree trunks that rest toward the bottom of the peat layer, laid down when the wetlands began to form 3-5 thousand years ago. In the Minute Books there is mention of "removing all trunks rootes of trees and other obstructions" from the channel<sup>105</sup> which may refer to bog oak because there were few large trees in the Fens at this time. Removing massive bog oak would have been a challenging task with no tractors or power machinery and would have required large groups of men and perhaps horses pulling on ropes tied to the trunks. The density and depth of bog oaks varies across the Fens but, in some areas, they are present in large numbers. Alan Bloom's book *A Farm in the Fen* describes the herculean task required to remove hundreds of bog oak from the relatively small area of Adventurers Fen in the 1940s when tractors and diggers were available to help with the work.<sup>143</sup>

They would have also encountered problems with the constant filling up of the drains with water because they would have excavated well below the water table in the surrounding Fens. A dewatering system of some kind would have been required to reduce the water accumulating on the channel. Wind pumps also known as whirligigs may have been used or horse driven pumps, turn pumps or men in chains. Andrewes Burrell in his presentation to Parliament in 1642<sup>129</sup> provides costs "To make Horse-mills, Tun-mills, Wheele-barrowes, Store-houses, and work houses, and to buy Spars, Deals, Nailes, Ginropes, and such like materials". In the protest song Powtes complaint which is recorded by Dugdale<sup>134</sup> as being contemporaneous with the

1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking there is reference to how Captain Flood (river flooding) "bears down banks and breaks their banks and Whirly-giggs asunder". During the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were many notices of patents for engines "for raising water and draining surrounded grounds". Walter Blith, in his English Improver treatise,<sup>130</sup> instructed "that having well provided against the waters of bordering Fens, find out the lowest part of all thy Lands, and thither draw a good substantial Master-drain through all thy lands, and there plant a water-Engine, which may either be wrought by the wind, or by the strength of horse, been possibly by the strength of two or three men".

The wet peat may have also slipped off the banks into the newly dug drains, forming a kind of slurry, although this risk could have been reduced by lessening the gradient of the bank. A slippage of peat of this kind in the 1940s is described in *Farm in the Fen* by Alan Bloom<sup>143</sup> which resulted in the death of a drainage worker. When the side of the trench caved in, he was engulfed in a mass of peat and mud. "His men, including those who had just got away in time, dug frantically but nothing that breathes can live long in that stuff and when at last they found him he was dead." Management of these issues would have been easier if shorter dammed sections of channel were excavated rather than a long open channel.

The channel crossed a number of existing channels and pre-historic roddens; notably the Croft River that crossed the channel near Welney. To prevent flooding of the new channel, the river could have been directed through a tunnel beneath the Hundred Foot River, or the channel up to Denver could have been constructed first and taken the flow after being dammed off from the rest of the channel to the south. Construction of tunnels is mentioned on several occasions in the Minute Books.<sup>47,104</sup> In areas at Earith close to River Ouse and others with ancient river channels, the workers would have needed to dig through gravel and silt which would have been harder work. In gravel areas, they would have suffered greater problems with ingress of water. The substrate would have also affected the nature of the flood bank and in the Minute Books there is mention of the bank close to Earith having problems with erosion.<sup>108</sup>

The Scottish soldiers were moved to work for the individual Adventurers in February 1652<sup>53</sup> which is likely to have involved hassoaking the land (clearing the existing vegetation of moorgrass, sedge and reeds) to allow crops to be grown as well as the construction of the Division Dykes to mark out the lots of land. They may also have worked on building new roads and bridges.<sup>138</sup>

The dam was opened close to the Hermitage Bridge to direct flow from the River Ouse up the Hundred Foot River in June or July 1652.<sup>109, 110, 111, 112</sup> This presumably entailed digging away the embankment and other structures that had, until then, protected the works from flooding from the River Ouse, which must have been a precarious task, albeit helped by dry conditions and low river flow in the summer of 1652.

Constructing the Hundred Foot River must have been exhausting, brutal, hard and dangerous work, particularly during the winter and the Minute Books record the resistance of the Scottish soldiers to being forced to undertake such hard work.<sup>73</sup>

### **Difficulties on the works**

The drainage works faced many difficulties, particularly during the first two years. A constant concern was funding the works which depended on the supply of money from the Adventurers through taxation on their land. Expenditure repeatedly exceeded their budgets. There are many entries in the Minute Books about funding problems and default of payment of taxes (including by Vermuyden) and, several times, under the conditions of their agreements with the Company, their lands were confiscated for sale to raise funds. This included the land of Miles Sandys, one of the key early proponents of the drainage works.

Another problem that occurred was a petition made against the Company for £5,000 for unpaid wages during the 1<sup>st</sup> Undertaking and further land was sold to raise funds to settle this claim.<sup>83</sup> The Company minutes often stressed the need to reduce the costs of the works so the wages of officers are cut and workers dismissed to reduce costs.<sup>88,106,110</sup> A constant conflict between the Adventurers and Vermuyden took place regarding the

control of costs; for example they tried to restrict costs on working on the South Level initially to £2,500 then £5,000 which was eventually greatly exceeded.

The Adventurers were often dissatisfied by the quality of their officers and on occasions this reached the point at which they dismissed many of them.<sup>88,106</sup> They were also concerned by the way contracts were awarded and they accused Mr Burton, one of the chief engineers, of paying excessive amounts to associates rather than finding the best price.<sup>88,89</sup> They also sought to prevent Vermuyden becoming involved in arranging contracts<sup>90</sup> against the conditions of his agreement with them and later appointed a clerk of contracts to better control their award.<sup>116</sup>

Another problem was in organising the payments to the workers on pay days because of lack of funds and disorganisation in moving the funds to the Fens. In April 1652 they were between 14 and 19 weeks late in paying the workers.<sup>105</sup> Such problems resulted in disorder on several occasions (sufficiently bad to be described as riots) and the workers seeking work elsewhere.

The Company was also faced by the opposition of many of the local population and there are several mentions of riots against the works in the Minute Books.<sup>59,65,155</sup> This required the movement of soldiers to prevent the disorder escalating.<sup>89,102,141</sup>

The Minute Books have a general tone of crisis management during the early period of the works but later, once the major engineering works were completed, with the running of the Hundred Foot River, the tone generally becomes much more business-like.

### **The weather, water levels and floods**

Little information on the weather conditions during 1651 and 1652 is available from the Minute Books although the autumn of 1651 and early 1652 appears to have been wet because the rivers are described as being brimmed full.<sup>95</sup> After this, there are no references to further periods of high flood risk. Historical weather records for England as a whole indicate that the period between 1651 and 1654 was warm and dry, with hot dry summers and drought conditions. The 17<sup>th</sup> century diary of Ralph Josselin<sup>132</sup> records that the winters of 1651 and 1652 (in Earls Colne in Essex) were mild and dry with low levels of snow fall in the winter. The Adventurers, therefore, seem to have been fortunate in facing relatively benign weather conditions during the early key part of the drainage works. If conditions had been less favourable, their strained funds would have been further tested, which might have led to the failure of the project.

In November 1651, after the arrival of the first group of Scottish prisoners but before the arrival of the second group from York, the bank of the Old Bedford River burst,<sup>95,97</sup> which released water across the drainage works and the newly cut Hundred Foot River and delayed the work. It is unknown whether this breach endangered the workers and prisoners who were there at the time. The Company investigated the causes of this breach to determine whether it was related to the quality of the construction of the bank, neglect, sabotage or a general failure of the design of the works. Various options were considered to alleviate the problem including release of water through tunnels constructed through the bank.

### **Illness and disease**

Before the drainage works, the Fens were regarded by outsiders as an unhealthy damp place. Dugdale 1662<sup>134</sup> writes "And what expectation of health can there be to the bodies of men, where there is no element of good? The air being for the most part cloudy, gross and full of rotten harrs, the water putrid and muddy, yea, full of loathsome vermin". This reputation was partly related to a prevalence of ague, a malarial disease spread by mosquitoes that caused periodic fits of shivering, fever and high temperature.<sup>145</sup> The Scottish prisoners would have been at high risk of contracting this disease, in the open air for long periods alongside other workers from whom the disease could be transmitted.

During the autumn and winter the workers would have been constantly exposed to waterlogged ground and

mud, perhaps not dissimilar to conditions in the trenches in the First World War. They would have been at risk from "trench foot" and other fungal skin diseases and one prisoner is mentioned in the Minute Books as suffering from rotting feet.<sup>37</sup>

Otherwise, the cold and damp conditions must have taken some toll on prisoners who had already suffered great physical stress during battles, exhausting marches and internment in prisoner-of-war camps before they arrived in the Fens, at a time when death rates were high among the general population.

## The Landscape

### Before the drainage works: grazing marshes, fens and meres

Fenland at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, before the large scale drainage schemes began, was a complex array of landscapes and habitats ranging from arable land and dry woodland on the elevated islands to reedbeds and meres on the lowest land.<sup>145,149,153</sup> The level of the land and the depth of the water table were key controls on the types of vegetation. Flooding of large areas of land occurred each winter as the rivers rose and the areas below the flood line (approximately 3.6m above sea level) were subject to flooding to different degrees. Land around the upland islands and at the margins of the Fens flooded relatively infrequently whereas the lowest land flooded almost every year and became free of water for a shorter period of the summer. On the lowest lying land, water remained throughout the year in the form of the meres. The degree to which rivers flooded was dependent on the nature of the land where they rose. The River Nene for example was more prone to flash flooding because of a more impermeable land type compared to the River Cam which is more fed by chalk.

Another important influence on the type of vegetation was the surface and sub-surface soil type. Silt and peat formed a large proportion of the fen soils but large areas were also underlain by gravels laid down by the changing passage of the wide channels of the rivers over thousands of years. The nature of the soils was and is a complex patchwork, in some areas changing from field to field. This controlled how quickly the level of the water table changed. A final major influence was the influence of man. Archaeological and pollen evidence suggests that human management of the Fens was a huge influence for thousands of years through livestock grazing during the summer over vast areas of the land which reduced the growth of woody vegetation and by cropping of reed, sedge and osier beds over well-established cycles. For example cutting of reed and sedge took place every 2-4 years and osier every nine or so years.<sup>147,148</sup> Trees and thorny scrub were cleared for kindling and firewood. During the middle ages, the Fens were a largely open landscape of predominantly hassy grassland, sedge, reeds and open water and only small areas of alder and willow carr.

From any elevated position, it would have been possible to look across a wide open landscape which would have been a complex intertwining variation in vegetation types made up of many colours ranging from the dark greens of rushes and moor grass to the richer greens of sweet grass, sedge and reeds. The great areas of wet grassland or water meadows were described by William of Malmesbury<sup>148</sup> – "the Plain [at Thorney] is as level as the Sea which with the flourishing of grass allureth the Eye and so smooth that there is nothing to hinder him that runs through it".

During the winter, huge areas of shallow flooding would have been seen, shallow enough at times for vegetation to break the surface of the water. Sometimes the flooding was deeper and the fens would have looked like a vast inland sea. Often in the cold winters of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the surface of flooded water would have frozen.

Patterns of flooding varied from year to year and over longer periods as climate changed; shifting the balance between the vegetation and landscape types. The period before the large-scale drainage schemes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is believed to have been particularly wet which may have been important in pushing the schemes forward.<sup>148</sup>



fig. 1.7

The main landscape/vegetation types were:

1. **Meres:** Many meres were in existence in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which included the expansive waters of Whittlesea Mere and Soham Mere but also many smaller meres such as Trundle Mere, Ugg Mere, Ramsey Mere and Willingham Mere. During periods of flooding in the winter, the extent of the meres increased and then fell back in the summer.
2. **Reedbeds:** Extensive reedbeds dominated by the common reed (*Phragmites communis*) surrounded the meres in wide reed shoals. Reedbeds would also have grown in damp areas of the open fen where the water table remained close to the surface for most of the year. Reedbeds were cropped for thatching on a regular cycle of 3-4 years.
3. **Sedge fen:** Dominated by saw sedge (*Cladium mariscus*), mixed with a rich undergrowth of other wetland plants, known as litter. These areas were cropped on a regular 4-5 years cycle to produce litter for overwintering cattle, thatching and kindling when dried.
4. **Wet grassland or water meadow:** These summer grazing grounds had an extremely rich sward of grasses and shorter growing sedges, soft rushes, sweetgrass and meadow flowers including yellow flag irises, meadowsweet and marsh orchids.
5. **Moor:** This is a distinctive type of vegetation dominated by tall clumps or hassocks of fenland grasses including purple moor grass, *Molinia caerulea*.
6. **Raised bog:** Raised bog is a distinctive habitat that forms where the accumulation of peat develops to a sufficient elevation to make it free of river flooding so that it becomes entirely fed by rain water. The peat becomes dominated by rapidly growing *Sphagnum* moss that increases the rate of accumulation of peat further. In such areas, the soil becomes more acidic and a distinctive vegetation develops of acid tolerant species including wild cranberries, sundews and larger shrubby plants such as bog rosemary and plants not typically associated with wetlands such as heathers and gorse. This vegetation type was present in the fens around Whittlesea Mere before it was drained in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The decline in land level after drainage was particularly marked here because the deep *Sphagnum* peat was particularly prone to wastage, famously recorded by the Holme posts in Holme Fen nature reserve. The extent of raise bog beyond Whittlesea Mere is unknown because it was so strongly affected by drainage and would have disappeared as a result of Medieval and 17<sup>th</sup> century

- drainage before reliable records are available. Raised bog can form a quaking unstable surface that shudders when walked upon with dangerous quagmires that can trap livestock and human beings.
7. **Osier beds:** In these areas, sallow and other willows were allowed to grow or cultivated to provided materials for basket making and construction of eel traps. The willows were cropped at regular intervals with a cycle of about 10 years.
  8. **Alder carr and birch woodland:** Alder carr on wetter ground and birch woodland on drier ground can develop in areas of sedge fen, reedbeds and wet grassland if grazing and cutting cease and succession is allowed to occur. Alder carr and birch woodland have developed on many of the remaining wetlands in the Norfolk Broads and Fenland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century after traditional management systems died out, although this was also the result of declining water tables due to drainage in the surrounding areas.
  9. **Turbaries:** Some areas of land were used for the cutting of turfs for fuel. Although this activity was widespread, some areas of land were managed specifically for this purpose with water levels maintained at levels suitable for digging and regrowth of turf; for example Adventurers and Woodwalton Fens that later became nature reserves. These areas produced a distinctive vegetation with many small pools created by digging into which reedbeds and sedge grew as they filled in.
  10. **Dry uplands:** Free of flooding, these areas supported arable crops and woodland for timber and firewood. Most of the fenland populations lived on these elevated areas.
  11. **Hards:** These lands were close to or above the flood line and provided winter grazing for cattle that could then be moved to their summer grazing grounds in the summer. Paddocks and farm buildings for cattle may have located on these areas free of damage by flooding.

The relative extent of these vegetation and habitat types before the large drainage schemes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century took place is unknown although it is thought that drainage was in a poor state because of a wetter climatic period, siltation of the rivers and previous failed drainage schemes. Wetter vegetation may have, therefore, increased in the late Elizabethan period and the reign of King James I.

### **Wildlife**

The Fens before drainage provided an extremely rich habitat for wildlife. During the winter when the ground was either flooded or wet, it supported immense populations of winter wildfowl such as wigeon, teal and waders such as ruffs and reeves, lapwing, curlew, godwit and snipe.<sup>145</sup> These provided an important source of income and food to the local people through wildfowling and collecting eggs for local consumption and sale in markets, for example in Cambridge and Peterborough. The wetter reedy areas supported great numbers of bittern, crane and water rail. Marsh harriers, hen harriers and kites were also abundant as well as ravens and these would have been a common sight soaring above the Fens. Starlings were extremely abundant and in the winter immense flocks or murmurations could be seen in the evening above the reedbeds before they came down to roost at night, even greater in size than the great murmurations that can now be seen in the Somerset Levels.

In the summer, when the flood water drained away, an extremely rich mosaic of vegetation developed, in a complex sward of reeds, sedges, rushes and flowers including many species of orchids, which supported an incredibly rich community of insect life; including swallowtail and the large copper butterflies. The waterways, rivers, creeks, drains and meres supported great populations of freshwater fish including enormous numbers of eel. Fishing provided an important food source and income for the local communities.

A remnant of these wetland communities can be found in Fenland nature reserves, including the Ouse Washes, Wicken and Chippenham Fens but these are greatly degraded compared to the pre-drainage habitats in the Fens.

### **After the drainage works**

The drainage works of the 17<sup>th</sup> century began the transformation of the Fens from a wild place to the agricultural landscape we see today; a transformation repeated in many wetlands throughout the world. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century drainage works, winter flooding greatly reduced and it became possible to develop mixed

agriculture of permanent grazing and arable crops. During this time, the land level began to decline as the water table fell and peat wastage occurred, reducing the thickness of the peat. This process of "drying out" of the landscape was delayed by the decline in the elevation that made it more difficult to drain the land. In addition, there were problems with silting up of the river outfalls.<sup>148</sup> Only through the invention of steam pumps did it become possible to provide effective drainage throughout the year. The transformation in the landscape that occurred during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in great changes in the landscape and ecology of the Fens and this was another period of great loss in biodiversity.<sup>161</sup> Further drainage works such as the construction of the Middle Level Drain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Cut Off Channel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, completed to the process of drainage, enhanced later by the use of more powerful and effectively controlled electrical drainage pumps by the Internal Drainage Boards since the war.

### **The landscape seen by the Scottish soldiers**

When the first Scottish prisoners of war arrived at Earith in late October 1651 they would have encountered a scene of industrious activity with thousands of men working on the Hundred Foot River, others raising the bank of the Old Bedford River to defend the drained land to the north west. The open cut of the Hundred Foot River ran in a straight black line through raw cut peat, crossed with planks and overlooked by wind pumps laid out in a long line all the way to Kings Lynn.

Looking to the west, they would have seen the vast flatlands of the Fens, with its interwoven types of vegetation; constantly changing shades of dried reeds and sedge and the darker hassocks of moor grass. Across this, the West River ran in its twisting path, surrounded by reeds, silted up and full of encroaching reedmace and sweet grass, spreading more each year since its inflow had been diverted into the Old Bedford River 20 years before. Many terns and gulls would have flown above the West River, hunting for frogs and fish. Around the river there may have been patches where rape and cole seed had been planted for the first time. Many marsh harriers and ravens would have soared above their heads.

Walking toward the bank of the Hundred Foot River, they would have passed the Civil War bulwark where English soldiers were stationed, a warning of the dangers of trying to escape, then beyond this, the dam that separated the River Ouse and Hundred Foot River, and below to the south the remains of Willingham Mere, reduced by then to a great bed of reeds. Construction works on the sluices, sasses and bridges at the Hermitage had commenced, great structures made of wooden beams and ropes. Walking up the south bank of the Hundred Foot River they saw, between the isles of Sutton and Haddenham, Ely Cathedral in the distance. To the south, the churches of Willingham and Over were visible along the horizon. Existing plots of land around Sutton and Mepal opened up into the expanse of Westmore inter-common. The work to excavate on the great drain had largely been completed by October, so they would have seen the great cut and bank, running for miles, the oily black of wet peat still largely free of weeds.

Within the cut of the Hundred Foot River, thousands of English dikers would have worked, covered in mud, shouting and cursing, running up and down the planks. Puddles of black peat water would have formed along the base of the drain, water seeping out of the bank. Already some of the prisoners might have been looking for escape routes, perhaps along the causeway that crossed the Fens between Earith and Haddenham to the east. The labourers were bottoming the new river, taking out debris and levelling the floor and shaping the gradient of the bank. In places, clay was laid down to seal the floor and strengthen the banks. Wheelbarrows were pushed down planks that made them crack and shudder with their weight. The clay quickly turned the black surfaces grey and produced a clinging, heavy mud that worked its way up their clothes. It also would have covered the planks, making it difficult not to slip into the slushy ooze at the base of the drain.

The prisoners joined this work, the hardest task digging debris out of the bank, and filling the wheelbarrows with clay. Within minutes they would have slipped on the mud, their white tops covered in mud and peat. Every day, their clothes would have been soaked and in the damp, wet air, remained wet until the morning.

In November, a few weeks after the soldiers arrived, the waters rose and banks filled to the brim and suddenly

the bank between Welches Dam and Welney burst, spreading water out of the Old Bedford River across the drainage works. Flood water ran into the open cut of the Hundred Foot River, forcing the labourers onto the banks. Until the water was pumped out or diverted through tunnels, their work shifted to top of the banks, raising them and lining them with clay. Standing there, exposed to a relentless, cold wind, they would have looked out at the great sea of the flood and the great flocks of wigeon and teal that rose up in a sudden burst of wing beats and cries set off by some noise from the drainage works. Other days, the mists and rains came down and they would have seen nothing apart from the exposed, raw bank of the drain.

Above all else it was cold and wet and there were months of the cold and wet to get through – backbreaking, brutal work before they could start to think of spring. Water would have run down their faces into their eyes and made it hard to see. Clenched teeth would have made their jaws ache with the effort to fight the cold. Often they must have slipped down the bank and got soaked in the cold seepage water and clay ooze at the base of the bank. The cold would have made it hard to use their hands and their feet would have been numb dead weights, making it even harder not to fall down the bank. Constantly wet and cold, the skin of some of the men started to rot and itched and ran with pain the moment they tried to warm them. The overseer, John Kelsey, above them on the bank would have shouted at them to get on with their work.

Scotland must have seemed very far from them then and they must have lost hope of making their way back home.

The summer of 1652 was hot and dry so they had to work in the sun with no shade, plagued by mosquitoes and horse flies. The wetness of the ground and the pools and mires would have been a relief to them then. They continued the work to bottom the Hundred Foot River but also worked on the Adventurers' lands deep in the Fens, preparing them for the first planting of crops as well as digging the Division Dykes. Upon the bank of the Hundred Foot River, they would have seen the rich grounds of the summer meadows full of yellow flag and orchids and purple loosestrife and meadowsweet and other Fenland flowers. The meadows would have been alive with the constant movement of insects, including butterflies and dragonflies of all colours and they would have seen these blow across the works. Throughout the summer they would have heard the endless reels of the song of the warblers and, at the end of the day, the calls of frogs.

Before long, they were told that they would be set free to leave and go home.

## **Legacy Of The Drainage Works**

Over 70 years have passed since the last great flood in the Fens in 1946. This is a great testimony to the engineering works in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and those that followed. The once wettest part of England has remained free of floods whereas many others have suffered from the damage caused by such events. The Fens have also been a great source of agricultural production, making a great contribution to the country's economy, of vital importance for the survival of the country during times of war. This is the legacy of the early drainage works and the work of the Adventurers and engineers, the English labourers and the Scottish and Dutch prisoners-of-war.

The legacy of the drainage has, however, not all been positive. The erosion of peat and release of carbon into the atmosphere over the last 350 years has been colossal<sup>163,164</sup> and the landscape, apart from the few nature reserves, has become ecologically degraded with large areas almost devoid of nature.<sup>162</sup>

The drainage works of the 17<sup>th</sup> century produced a great conflict between opposing ideas; the preservation of a way of life and longstanding common rights of the local population against the national interest of increased economic value of the region; battles that have been repeated many times since in England and across the world. Once the drainage works were completed this conflict ebbed away and the new reality

became established that the area would be a centre of agriculture and every means were followed to increase food production. The battles between the commoners and the drainers became a distant part of the region's history.

Today, however, they have renewed relevance. The effect of climate change on weather and sea level is likely to increase the risk of coastal and river flooding. The degradation and loss of the peat soil and the consequences of economic and political changes on agriculture may make current forms of land management harder to sustain. The continued carbon releases from the soil will need to be addressed to achieve zero carbon emissions in the UK.<sup>165</sup> Consequently, a second period of great change in the Fens may be approaching in the next few decades. The arguments and conflicts that this will entail may not be so dissimilar to those in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, conflicts between economics and way of life, about the governance of the management of the landscape; individual interests against the general good and deciding what the general good means. These were the kind of discussions that took place in Parliament and in the Fens before the Act of Drainage in 1649. Through the work of organisations such as Fens for the Future and the pioneering work of the Great Fen Project and Wicken Visions, the possibilities of a new future for the Fens are being explored and considered. Rewilding some areas of the lands may be part of this change – forming part of achieving government aims to increase the proportion of the UK landscape in a natural or wild condition.<sup>166</sup>

In this debate, we should not forget that history is very much a part of the landscape. An understanding of history deepens how we view the places where we work and live. Our sense of being is connected with place and this connection is forged out of the past. It is important, therefore, that, when planning the future, we remember, honour and build on these links with the past. The story of the Scottish soldiers in the Fens deserves to take its place in this history.

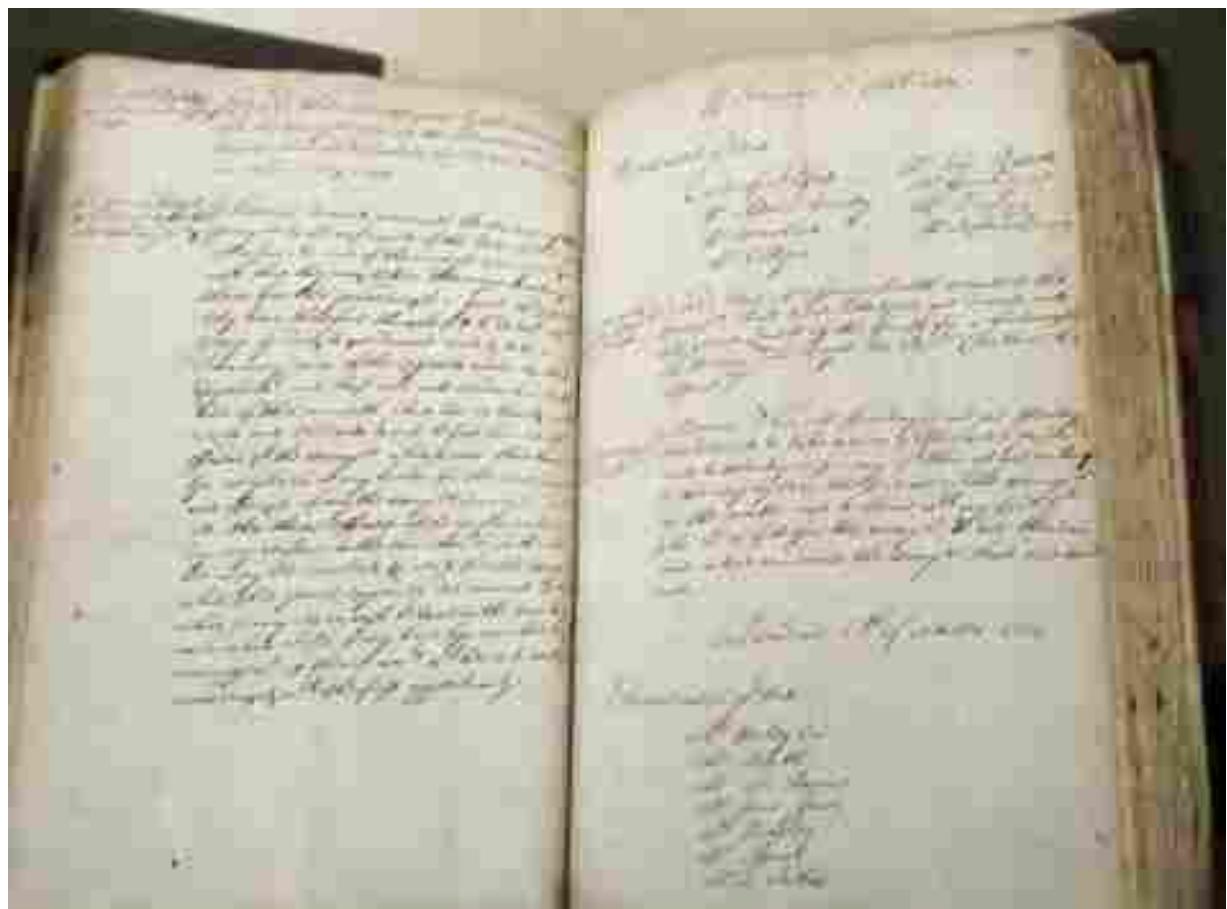


fig. 1.8

# TRANSCRIPTIONS, REFERENCES AND NOTES

## Primary Sources

The following section provides a transcription of minutes of the Proceedings of the Society of Adventurers, 1651 – 1652 (R59/31/9/5) and 1652-1656 (R59/31/9/6) in the Cambridgeshire Archives. All references to the Scottish prisoner-of-war in the Minute Books are provided along with other entries referenced in this book. In some cases, the text was not fully legible which is indicated by {brackets}. Additions to the text for clarification are in [square brackets].

### Transfer of Scottish soldiers to the Fens

**1. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1651 (p. 111)** That Mr Fountayne and Mr Henley are desired to take a view of the Scotch prisoners and to entertayne so many of them as are willing to bee imployed in the services of the Companie on the workes, and to advise with my Lord St John what is fitt for the Companie to doe therein and what condicions the Companie shall be bound unto.

**2. 11<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 115)** The Companie havinge lately received an order from the Councell of State for imployinge of the private Scotch prisoners in the workes of dreyninge did order that a letter bee written unto my Lord Chiefe Justice Saint John as followeth:

May it please your Lordshipp the greatest part of all our tyme this weeke and the last hath byn spent in contriving which way wee might best dispose of such of the Scotch prisoners in Totchill Fields as were able to worke, and the State should please to entrust us with for preventinge theire runninge away, or actinge any thinge prejudicall to the present Government, and keeping them at worke: To that ende, wee did resolve and propose to become petitioners to his excellencye the lord generall that hee would bee pleased to appoint some person in nature of provost marshall to whome the Companie would allow a reasonable sallary for his service to take care of them, and prevente their straglinge, and punish the offender; and wee intended to have clothed them all in a white habite, or some other colour, with cappes of different colour, whereby they might be knowne from Englishmen and lay a charge upon our overseers and officers in the works; if any of them were absent from their workes, or did oppose the established government, to give present notice to the provost marshall, who had the charge of them, to apprehend and punish them as the state of his excellencye should please to directe. And wee did hope that they might have byn brought to good discipline as receiving a fittinge reward from us for their labour they might have just cause to blesse God for the parliamentary mercy to them by order from the Councell of State of the 10th of this instant, wee understand that security is required to pay £5 for every man (exceeding 10 in a 100), which shall goe beyond Trent, or which shall acte any thinge prefudicall to the state which is an engagement the Companie are fearefull to enter into for persons of theire qualtye, and condition; and, therefore, unles the state shall bee pleased to take off the securitye by theire order required and accept other said proposalls (which, as wee conceive is all wee cann safely doe wee dare not meddle with them which wee thinke our duty to make knowne to your lordship being very sorry for your Lordshipp's trouble in this busines for which wee have just cause wee shall ever acknowledge your lordshipp's favour intended to the Companie herein, and expressed upon all occasions both to the Companie in generall and to your lordshipp's most humble servants.

**3. 14<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 116)** Mr Say, Mr Trenchard, Mr Henley, Mr Fountayne and Mr Latch or any two of them are desired to wayte on his Excellency the Lord Generall to obtayne a warrant for the delivery of the Scotch prisoners for the use of the Companie accordinge to the order of the Councell of State and to make the best contract they can touchinge the said prisoners and with least prejudice to the Companie and to procure the delivery of the said prisoners at Erith if they can.

Mr North, Mr Trenchard, Mr Fountayne and Mr Bradley, Mr Henley and Mr Trafford, or any two of them, are desired to take a list and view and make choice of such of the Scotch prisoners as they shall conceive fitt for the service of the Companie, in order to the sendinge of them to the Fennes.

To employ the Scottish prisoners first for securinge the adjudged part from the countrie and to perfect the generall workes of the Companie on the north side of Bedford river before they bee imployed on the south side.

Whereas the Councell of State have thought fitt by their order of 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1651 to appoint such Scottish prisoners as are fitt and able to worke to bee sett on worke by the Companie in theire workes of the Fennes. And whereas Major Miller of Major of Collonell Baxters regiments, hath recommended one John Johnston for a person very fitt to receive and take the care of the said Scottish prisoners according to the said order. It is therefore ordered that the said John Johnston doe receive the said Scottish prisoners and hee is to take care that the said Scottish prisoners or any of them doe not depart or absent themselves contrary to the said order but cause them to bee sett on workes in such sort as the Companie or five or more of them or theire officers in the Fennes shall from tyme to tyme direkte, and for his paynes hee shall receive a fitting sallary to bee paid him by the receiver of Expenditor for the Companie for which this order shall be theire warrant.

**4. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 116)** Ordered that Thomas Bunbury and Hugh Farnham or one of them doe receive at Erith one hundred sixty five Scotch prisoners from Corporall Foster for the use and service of the Companie of Adventurers for dreyninge of the great Levell of the Fennes and to give a receipt for so many as hee shall receive, not reckoning women or boys hee or they givinge security to Gaultier Frost Esquire Secretary to the Councell of State for the use of the State, according to an order of the Councell of State of the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1651.

Ordered that Thomas Bunbury and Hugh Farnham or such as shall receive the Scotch Prisoners from Corporall Foster to the use and service of the Companie shall bee disposed and imployed in the workes of dreyninge as Anthony Hamond, John Thurloe and John Walker Esquires or any of them shall directe and appointe.

Ordered that all the officers of the workes in the Great Levell of the Fennes shall use theire best endeavour to prevent all or any of the Scotch prisoners now sent downe from goinge beyonde Trent by the Councell of State or the Adventurers for dreyninge the said great levell in pursuance of the order of the Councell of State of the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1651.

Ordered that John Kelsey bee overseer in chife of all the Scottish prisoners. And wherein hee shall find anything amis or defective in them or any of the workes of the whole levell to indicate the amendment and forthwith to certifie the Companie the truth of the same. And for his sallary hee shall receive and have ten shillings six pence a weeke for the yeare ensuinge to begin from the daie whereof hee shall have nyne shillings paid unto him weekly or monthly as he shall desire and the rest at the yeare ende.

It is ordered that the Clarke of the Companie doe once every month certifie the Councell of State the number of the Scottish prisoners and what decrease there is of the eyther by death or otherwise. And all the officers of the Companie in case of absence or death of any of them are forthwith to certifie the same to the Clarke of the Companie and however once every month to certifie the Companie what number of Scottish prisoners are upon the workes.

Ordered that Mr Jessop, receiver of the Companie, doe pay or cause to bee paid all such some or somes of money as have or shall bee expended and layd out in order to the goinge downe of the Scottish prisoners as shall bee sett downe in writinge and allowed by Robert Henley and John Fountayne Esquires.

Ordered that a Letter bee written and sent downe to Mr Hamond and Mr Thurloe and with copies of the severall orders made this day whereby they may be acquainted with the providing of the Companie as touchinge the goinge downe of the Scottish prisoners to bee imployed in general workes of the Fennes.

**5. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 117)** It is ordered by the Companie of Adventurers for the dreyninge the great Levell of the Fennes that the bearer hereof Thomas Bunbury doe with all convenient speede repaire to Yorke & apply himselfe to the commander of the guard of the Scotch prisoners there and to desire to see them drawne forth and thereby to informe him-selfe how many able persons there are of them hayle and sound without wives and willinge and accustomed to labour and forthwith to return the Companie account thereof by the first post that according to an order of the Councell of State in that behalfe of the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, the Companie may provide for the disposall of such of them at Peterburgh as are fitt for their service.

Ordered that Thomas Bunbury doe receive them at Peterburgh and give security as hee hath done for those att Tothill Fields.

Ordered that a letter bee written to Sir William Manton to desire him to write to the Commission at Yorke to send to Peterburgh all such Scottish prisoners as Thomas Bunbury shall allow of and certifie the tyme when they shall bee there.

Ordered that Mr Walker one of the members of the Companie bee desired to goe downe to Yorke there to exercise power of Comptroll over Thomas Bunbury in the choice of the Scottish prisoners and that some bee chosen but men hayle and sound of bodies and able and fitt for labour.

**6. 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1651 (p. 120)** Proposition beinge made for some quantity to bee given to Corporall Foster and the Companie that went downe with the Scottish prisoners whereupon the Companie orders that theire Receiver doe give them fortie shillings as a gratuity from them.

Motion was made that the Companie would entartayne some Scottish prisoners that are new at Nottingham and they shall be delivered at Erith without any charge to the Companie.

**7. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 125)** They sent letters to Yorke to Mr Walker by the Satterday post and doe expect to have many more of the Scotts sodainly in the level and desire you to finde some fitt person amongst the Scotch Prisoners fitt for a messenger to be employed upon the Companie affayes as well here in London as to and from the Fennes.

**8. 5<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 129)** A question being put whether or not the Company will have any more Scotch workmen imployed on the workes. It was resolved in the affirmative.

Another question beinge also put how many more shall bee imployed. It was resolved there should bee as many more imployed (as will make up those now imployed) a thousand Scotch workmen.

**9. 14<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 139)** Your letter from Yorke of the 11<sup>th</sup> instant the Companie received the last night. And upon reading thereof thinke it not necessary to write more unto you than onely to referre you to their former letters, wherein they signifie theire resolutions of having as many of the Scotch prisoners at Yorke as are fitt for theire service and that you should doe your best to put the charge of conductinge them to Peterborough or at least send thereof upon the Country and likewise to delay the receiving of them as long as you could without endangering the totall loosinge of them. They intreat you to pursue the instructions you received in their said former letters and tymely to give them notice when the Scotts will bee at Peterburgh. For shoes and stockins we know not how to avoyd the providing of so many as are necessary and wholy leave it to your discretion to mannage it to the best advantage of the Companie. For the allowance in their march you must doe it as cheape as you can. Those that went from here were allowed 4d per diem and 20s for the whole number but wee are informed that was to little, we take no care of money for you in regard to your letter said you may be furnished by Mr Berry which bill the Companie will take care to pay forthwith this being all in charge.

**10. 17<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 139)** Ordered that Mr Jessop receiver of the Companie doe forthwith paie or cause to bee paid unto Mr Fountayne or his assigns the sum of fiftie poundes beinge so may be received by Mr Walker at Yorke for the use and service of the Companie and this order shall be the receivors warrant.

**11. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 144)** Ordered that a letter bee written to Mr Hamond and Mr Walkers letter directed to him enclosed and advertize him that since his last letter the Companie are enformed there are 210 Scotts upon theire march to Peterburgh and that they doe Intend to bee there by the 30<sup>th</sup> of this month. To that purpose he is desired to appoint some fitt persons to meeete them and to provide tools and accommodation for them.

**12. 1<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 150)** The Companie desires to heare some news touchinge the Scotts and how they doe behave themselves. They received a letter this daie from Mr Walker dated at Grantham 28 November last so that you

will speedily heare they are come to Peterborough and if in case there be found any Scotts that are taken running awaie to secure them that justice may be done according to the resolve of parliament.

**13. 31<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 161)** Memorandum to gett 500 Scott prisoners from Durham to bee first to Lynne according to the order lately made at the Councell of State.

**14. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1651 (p. 165)** Ordered that Mr Say bee desired to speake with Sir Arthur Hasellrigge touchinge the 500 Scotch prisoners now att Durham and to desire him to give warrant to Mr Walker one of the members of the Companie who is desired to take the paines to goe downe to Durham to have them delivered at Lynne for the service of the Companie. In which imployment the Company desire him to follow the same course as hee did in the choice of the prisoners at Yorke.

**15. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1652 (p. 165)** That the Clarke of the Companie forthwith repaire to the secretary of the Councell of State and take out the order of the Councell for the Scottish prisoners at Durham to bee employed in the works and to deliver it to Mr Say.

**16. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1652 (p. 197)** Ordered that Mr Walker bee desired to goe to Durham and make choice of all such Scotch prisoners as are hayle and sound and fitt for labour to bee employed in the service of the Companie as soon as the Companie have obteyned a warrant for the purpose under the hand of Sir Arthur Hasilrigge.

**17. 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1652 (p. 213)** Ordered (in pursuance of a former order) as soone as Mr Say have procured a warrant under the hand and seale of Sir Arthur Hasselrigge that Mr Walker is hereby desired to repaire to Durham and there make choice of such Scotch prisoners as he shall finde hayle and sounde to bee drawne out for the use and service of the Companie.

**18. 7<sup>th</sup> March 1653 (p. 60)** A letter received from the Councell of State directed to the Companie was read over whereby they signifie theyre willingness to dispose of certaine Dutch prisoners taken in the late engagement between the fleetes for the use and service of the Companie whereupon Mr William Weston, Mr Sampson, Collonel Jones, Doctor Fryer and Mr Staunton were desired to attend the Lord Chiefe Justice St John to know his Lords opinion what is fitt for the Company to doe upon the said letter whereupon they made returne that my Lord Chiefe Justice would readily comply with the Companie what they should doe therein whereupon the Companie agreed to meete again on Thursday next to take the said letter into consideration.

**19. 10<sup>th</sup> March 1653 (p. 61)** The Companie resumed the debate touching the Dutch prisoners and the entertainment of 400 into theire service.

**20. 19<sup>th</sup> March 1653 (p. 68)** The letter from the Councell of State was resumed touchinge the entertainment of several dutch prisoners and reade out as followeth.

There beinge several Dutch prisoners taken in the late engagement att sea between the fleete of the Commonwealth and that of the united provinces and understandinge they may bee usefull to you in your works in the great Levell of the Fennes have thought fitt to lett you know that wee shall bee willinge to dispose of the them for that purpose in case you shall signifie unto us your desires on that behalf.

Ordered that Mr Henley in the name of the Company bee desired to signe this ensuing letter (in answer to the former) directed to the Councell of State.

Wee are very sensible and thankfull for your honorable proposall and offer to us of dutch prisoners as are fitt to bee employed in our works in the great Levell of Fennes and if you shall please to spare and send to us to bee delivered at Lynne such as are sound and fitt for labour wee shall take order there to receive them which nevertheless wee humbly submitt to your Lords honorable direction.

**21. 16<sup>th</sup> June 1653 (p. 96)** Upon receipt of a letter from Mr Thurloe touchinge an offer of Dutch prisoners to bee employed in the works it was desired that Mr Henley, Collonell Smith, Collonell Cashell, Mr Crane and Dr Fryer would attend the councell tomorrow morninge to treate with them about the same.

Resolved upon the question that the Companie doe accept of 500 prisoners to bee sent downe and imployed in the works.

**22. 18<sup>th</sup> June 1653 (p. 97)** Whereas the Company have lately entertyned 500 dutch prisoners to be imployed in the great levell of the fennes who are sodainly to goe downe into the said levell it is therefore ordered that Mr Hamond bee desired forthwith to take care to provide spades and shovells to worke with all and hutts for them to lodge in and such accomodations for them in such sort as Mr Hamond shall thinke fitt and necessary.

**23. 22<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1653 (p. 98)** Ordered that Mr Jessop bee desired to paie unto Captain Stanley Stevenson who is to goe along with the Dutch prisoners to Elie the sum of five poundes, three poundes whereof hee is forthwith to lay out for twenty paire of shoes for the said prisoners and fortie shillinges thereof is to bee towards his expences and a letter is forthwith to bee written to the Lieutenant now attending the said prisoners on theire march.

The Company have made choice of fouer hundred and fortie Dutch prisoners who are now upon theire march towards Elie and will bee there or at Cambridge on Satterdaie or Sunday next. The Comissary Generalls warrant directed to Collonell Humfries on the cheife officer of the dragoones at Peterburgh or Crowland is here enclosed sent you which is to bee forthwith sent away to him likewise along with order for reimbursinge the Company which they lay out out for shooes or {footes} out of the Dutch prisoners pay. The copie also of an order to the bayliffes of Yarmouth or such other officers in whose custody the Dutch prisoners are there to receive sixtie more to make up the former number of five hundred. I thinke the Company will desire Mr Walker or some other to goe thither for that purpose. There are five and twenty paires of shoes cominge downe with these prisoners. The Company conceieve it the best way to quarter them at Swafham Waterbeach and other parts most averse to the Company which they nevethles referre to your consideration. The warrant is full enough authorizing you to that purpose.

Ordered that Mr Jessop be ordered to paie unto Captain Allsop Marshall Generall the sum of five poundes for his paynes and care in and his abilitie shewne to the Company about the obteyninge the Dutch prisoners.

Ordered that Mr Walker and Mr William Maniston bee desired perticularly to take care and oversight of the Dutch prisoners now sent downe to the intent that may be best disposed of from tyme to tyme for the service of the Company and that there may be a provision of receipt and all other thinges necessary as they shall see cause for, with theire respectes to the Companie they shall have each of them after the rate of fortie shillings to bee paid unto them by the expendor weekly.

The Companie retorne answer to you last that is to the providing tents and quarters tor the dutch prisoners. They conceive you have by this tyme a full answer by theire former letter for by the warrant the soldyers are authorized to take charge of them which cannot otherwise bee done but by quartering them in howses, barnes or churches.

**24. 24<sup>th</sup> June 1653 (p. 100)** Ordered that Mr Jessop bee desired to paie unto Collonell Willian Smith and Mr Oxenbridge all such money as they have layd and expended in order to the entertyninge of your Dutch prisoners.

**25. 30<sup>th</sup> June 1653 (p. 101)** Ordered that Mr Stevenson who was desired to conducte the Dutch prisoners to Elie and is now retourned shall have paid him by Mr Jessop the Receivor and for his paines the sum of fortie shillings over and above the five pounds hee formerly received.

**26. 4<sup>th</sup> July 1653 (p. 104)** Ordered that Mr Jessop receiver of the Companie bee desires to paie unto Lieutenant Banckes who conducted the dutch prisoners downe to Elie the sum of ten poundes as a gratuity to bee paid as followeth that is to say three poundes to the said Lieutent, forty shillings to bee by him distributed to the partie of horse and five poundes to the partie of foote soldyers for theire paines.

## **Arrangements for the Scottish soldiers in the Fens**

**27. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 117)** Ordered that 666 yards of white kersey not exceeding the rate of 2s or 2s 3d the yard bee contracted for which is to bee made use of in makinge clothes for the use and service of the Scottish prisoners now first downe in the Fennes and Colonell Samuell Jones one of the members of the Companie is desired to contracte for the same for the best advantage of the Companie whereupon the Companie allowinge these of Mr Jessop the receiver is the make payment accordingly.

Mr Bradley is desired to make enquiry of the price of cappes which are to bee bought and sent downe for the use and service of the Scottish prisoners and lately send downe upon the works.

**28. 17<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 120)** Mr Trenchard is desired to treat with some man to provide shoes for the service of the Scottish labourers some to be 12 some 13 and some of 14 sizes.

Ordered that Mr Fountayne, Mr Henley snr, Mr Latch or Mr Browne or any two of them are desired to meete tomorrow morning and then agree to the sending downe of cappes for the service of the Scotch labourers and at what rates and prices and to conclude and agree for the same.

**29. 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1651 (p. 122)** Ordered that Mr Jessop Receiver of the Companie doe paie all such several bills of expence as are to bee paid for and towards the provision of clothes, shoes and other necessaryes for the service of the Scotch prisoners imployed on the works. The said several bills beinge first approved of and signed by Robert Henley and John Fountayne Esquires. And this order shall be the Receivors warrant.

**30. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 124)** The Companie sent downe cloth shirts and other thinges for the Scots to Cambridge with a letter to Mr Crane of Cambridge and one enclosed to you which he hath certified the Companie that hee hath received.

**31. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 136)** And whereas they have lately been informed that some of the Scots are much discomfited at the clothe was sent downe excepting much against the colour they desire you to signify unto them that one George Hume by name and diverse others at the church nere Tothill fields were then extremely pleased at a white colour and it was theire none desire, and with all they desire you to lett them know they are sent to bee their none markers and therefore without any more taken said in it the Companie doe desire you forthwith to send up the names of all such as finde fault that they may speedily send them away beyond here rightly apprehending that such are not fitt servants to bee imployed in their works.

**32. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 141)** As to the last part of your letter the Companie doe conceive that the bearer hereof Sanders Mackdell may bee a fitt messenger for them and they condisende to the dyeing of his cloth and the Companie doe leave it to your discretion to give him what you think fitt to defray his handlling expenses.

**33. 31<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 161)** Ordered that a letter be written to Mr Hamond as followeth - The messenger was detayned untill now in expectation of sending downe an order from the Councill of State which not beinge yet ready wee shall send you by the next oportunity for clothinge the Scotch prisoners the Companie can onely say theire shirts cost 2s 6d a shirt and theire kersies cost 2s 3d a yard for theire clothes and if you can clothe them as cheape in the country the Companie desire you to provide them clothinge if not to lett them know it by the next and at what rate you can doe it in the country for shoes they intreat you to provide them at Wisbich which they heare is a cheape place.

**34. 7<sup>th</sup> January 1651 (p. 164)** For the shirts and sutes for the Scots the Companie will take speedie course for the clothinge of them forthwith.

**35. 7<sup>th</sup> January 1651 (p. 164)** Ordered that the Scots that are not yet furnished with clothes bee forthwith provided for here according as the other Scotch prisoners were and at the like rates.

**36. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1651 (p. 165)** Whereas there are severall Scotch prisoners that are destitute of shirts sutes and stockings

and are now employed on the workes it is ordered that 256 shirts bee forthwith bought and 128 sutes and stockings provided at the charged of the Companie. And it is further ordered that Mr Helney and Mr Thurloe or any one of them be desired signe the particular bills that shall bee bought In touchinge the {premisses} whereupon Mr Jessop receiver of the Companie or in his absence Mr Dalton forthwith to paie the respective bills.

**37. 28<sup>th</sup> January 1652 (p. 171)** For the Scotch prisoner whose feete begin to rott the Company know not what course to take at present but doe referre it unto yourselfe to take what care you can to preserve the man if possible eyther by sendinge him to Cambridge, London or otherwise.

**38. 13<sup>th</sup> February 1652 (p. 177)** Ordered that the 156 shirtes and 128 sutes and stockings now provided by Mr Henley for the Scotts employed on the workes in pursuance of an order of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Jan last bee forthwith sent downe to Mr John Crane of Cambridge and from there to Mr Hamond att Wilburton who is desired to dispose them of as hee shall see cause.

**39. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1652 (p. 208)** That John Kelsey bee continued to have all oversight of the Scotts.

**40. 6<sup>th</sup> May 1652 (p. 215)** Ordered that upon the certificate of Mr Kelsey and of such other person as the superintendents shall from tyme to tyme appointe touchinge the number of Scotts upon the musters and the moneys due for their lodgings Mr Latch the Comptroller may from tyme to tyme issue his warrant to the Expenditor for payment of such proportion of money to be for the Scotts as hath byn usually allowed them formerly for their paie and also of such moneys as shall bee so certified to bee due and owinge for their lodgings.

**41. 29<sup>th</sup> May 1652 (p. 225)** Upon the motion of Mr Henley on the behalfe of the Country that there are several Scotch women bigge with child, amongst the workmen and therefore desire the Companie order on some course taken to free the Country from charge. And also moved that the Scotch prisoners that are now remayninge may be sett on worke by the great whereupon it is ordered accordingly and left to the superintendents and and Mr Latch or any one of them to set the price of such worke as they shall doe, and as to the Scotch women the Companie will at a fuller meeting on Mondaie next debate the same.

### **Deployment and work of the soldiers**

**42. 15<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 116)** That Mr Trenchard is hereby contented and doth agree to bee responsable for one William Cristen and Mr Trafford doth the like for William Worley two Scottish prisoners and they doe undertake that the said prisoners shall bee ready at the disposal of the Companie whensoever they shall thinke fit.

**43. 5<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 129)** Ordered that the Clarke write a letter to Mr Hamond to this effecte - upon reading of a letter directed to the Companie from Mr Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner Esquire it is ordered that James Cuthbert Scotch prisoner bee received and sent downe upon the workes.

**44. 12<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 136)** The bearer James Cuthbert is a Scottish prisoner and is received at the request of Thomas Challoner Esquire and Colonell Henry Martin, hee beinge sicke when the other went downe the Companie doe desire you to put him under charge of Kelsey and Johnston with rest.

**45. 12<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 136)** If you finde a fitt person amongst the Scotts as may bee employed as a messenger to and fro with letters they desire you to send him up this being all at present jermayne.

**46. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 141)** As to the last part of your letter the Companie doe conceive that the bearer hereof Sanders Mackdell may bee a fitt messenger for them and they condisende to the dyinge of his cloth and the Companie doe leave it to your discretion to give him what you thinke fitt to defray his travelling expenses.

**47. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 141)** Ordered that another letter bee sent to Mr Hamond which is to bee enclosed in the former as followeth - the Companie desire to know how much of the new Owse remaynes unbottomed and in what places and who the respective takers, And in case they doe not proceede to bottom it, to sett the Scotts or some other

presently on worke to bottom it. They desire also to know whether the tonnells bee taken upon the north banke from Welshes dam downewards and that banke served.

**48. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (pp. 153-154)** Ordered that Mr Moore the surveyor shall have 4 Scotts prisoners allowed for to assiste him in rowing and carrying chayne and other imployment in order to the surveying of the Fennes and Mr Walker is to give direction that so many of the Scotch prisoners be drawne out for the service aforesaid. And when the said Mr Moore hath noe other imployment for them they are to returne to the other workes againe. The Companie doe agree that on Monday come fortnight next so many of the members of the Companie as are willing may then if they please take into consideration the entertaynement of the Scotch prisoners for their private occasions.

**49. 10<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (p. 155)** Upon reading a letter from Mr Hamond it is ordered that an answer theirof bee sent unto him as followeth - Yours of the 8 Dec was this day read on to the Companie and as to that part as concerns the Scotts the Companie doe intend and this day have ordered that they shall not be employed to hassakinge any perticular mans worke or any other private workes so long as there is any generall worke of the Companie to bee done. And if they are employed in hassacking any perticular mans grownde or other private worke the Companie expects to bee answered for the same, at the same rate as other labourers in the Country use to take for the like work. And the Companie to paie the Scotts and the Companie desire that if you give waie to implore them upon any private worke that you would take care that the Companie may be answered accoordinge to this order. And the Companie doe leave it to your consideration whether it is not fitt for all the Scotts for the present to be first employed at Mepall.

**50. 10<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (p. 156)** As to the bearer Sanders Mackdell the Companie have orders that he shall have 10d a day allowed for him and 6d a weeke on and above his allowance towards his shooes and the Companie doe expecte that hee should come up once every weeke constantly with letters, hee hath had a new payre of shooes here which cost 3s and is to bee deducted out of his allowance of six shillings four pence a weeke. And if the rest of the Scotts prove honest and laborious the Companie will be ready to give them {encouragement} by any fittinge allowance as they shall {justify} theire meritte from you, wherewith you may acquainte them as from the Companie.

Sir Ordered that Sanders Mackdell one of the Scotch prisoners employed by the Companie as theire messenger shall have allowed him 10d a daie and sixpence a weeke towards shooes on and above his allowance and Mr Hamond is to take notice that the Companie doe expect hee shall come up once and he worke constantly with letters. And it is further ordered that Mr Dalton sent it to Mr Jessop bee desired to provide a bed and bedding with a payre of shirts for him.

**51. 17<sup>th</sup> December (p. 157)** Upon reading of a letter from Mr Hammond it is ordered that an answer thereof bee sent onto him as followeth: Your letter of 15 instant was this day read oute to the Companie and as to that part which concernes hassaking private workes the Companie are of the same opinion they were in their former letter viz they doe expect to bee answered for the private worke of hassaking done by the Scotts and the same rates as other labourers use to take for the like worke and that they bee not hereafter placed upon any mans worke where the pay is difficult to be gayned and if they be upon any such worke the Companie would have them removed.

**52. 24<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (p. 160)** Ordered that every private man whatsoever that desires to have his land hassaked by the Scotts shall henceforward allow unto the Companie six shillings an acre for every acre so hassaked. And in regard Mr Henley does offer six shillings an acre for every acre of his owne Adventurers Land as shall be hassaked by the Scotts. It is further ordered by the Companie that Gabriell Ellyott his servant doe {inquire} of them as by Mr Hamond shall bee thought necessary to bee forthwith sett at worke and imployed in hassaking Mr Henley's owne Adventurers Lands.

**53. 31<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 161)** That the order whereby 6s an acre is to been given by every perticular man whose land is to be hassaked by the Scotts is to have this amendment added to it viz instead of the word (them) this word (Companie) is to bee interlyned.

To know of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden what hee intends to doe about payinge the Companie for the Scotts for hassackinge his private Adventurers landes.

**54. 9<sup>th</sup> January 1651 (p. 165)** Ordered that my Lord St John or whome his Lordshipp shall name shall have power to choose twenty Scotch prisoners out of the number of those that lately come from Yorke to bee imployed by himselfe in his owne particular affayres as his owne service and accordingly to provide for them clothes and otherwise. And his Lord likewise to paie to the Company so much money as it cost them to bring the said twenty prisoners from Yorke to Peterborough. And his Lord is hereby desired to give order that a certificate bee made to the Councell concerning the said prisoners in such manner as the Companie are obliged to doe.

**55. 23<sup>rd</sup> February (p. 183)** Ordered that all such Scottish prisoners as are now imployed in the workes of the great levell of the fennes shall bee divided amongst the Companie Of Adventurers according to the twenty Lotts or shares and lotts are to bee drawne for them and it is further ordered that Mr Hamond bee desired to take care to see there bee an equall and indifferent division made according to the aforesaid twenty lotts or shares.

**56. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1652 (p. 258)** Sir Cornelius Vermuyden affirmes that that place of the northe bancke of Bedford river between Erith and Mepall is very little deficient but the Scotts are in hand repairinge of it.

**57. 16<sup>th</sup> September 1652 (p. 2)** Upon reading the petition of Bridget Chiney wife of James Chiney one of the Scotch prisoners praying an enlargement or imployment of her husband in some easier worke than hee is now put unto, not beinge bred up to such hard labour. It was thought fit that the said petition should bee recommended unto Mr Hamond who is desired to consider in what way hee may bee imployed suteable to his ability and breedinge without prejudice to the Companie. And to give order for disposing of him accordingly.

**58. 30<sup>th</sup> October 1652 (p. 26)** Ordered that Alexander the messenger or foote post of the Companie shall be allowed the sum of fouer and twenty shilling and five pence towards the expense on clothes and apparel according to a bill now presented to the Companie provided that this bee not brought in as a president for the tyme to come.

#### **Disorder and running away**

**59. 18<sup>th</sup> April 1651 (p. 27)** Mr Hamonds letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> instant read over whereupon ordered that the heads of an answer there unto are as followeth - As touching the riott made by certain women that hee bee desired to send up a messenger on purpose who is to bring up the names and places of abode of all such persons as appeared disorderly or shall hereafter appear in opposition to the proceedinges of the Companie.

**60. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 125)** They desire you to call upon Kelsey to send up presently a list of all the names of the Scottish Prisoners at the works as well sicke as others and to notify whether any be dead or run awaie and how many and once every month without fayle to doe the like that the Companie may give account thereof to the Councell of State accordinge to theire order.

**61. 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1651 (p. 128)** The Companie are very sorry for the departure of the Scotts and might against their wills bee forced to extraordinary severity towards them for the present they desire you strictly to examyn Johnston the Provost Marshall and if you finde hee gave not present notice of their departure or hath byn negligent in pursuite and apprehension of them, wee shall proceede against him and you may lett the rest know that theire is a stricte law persuinge theire fellows even death without mercy to all that absent themselves without leave.

**62. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 135)** As touching turffe cutt (since the Adjudication) in the Adventurers landes, the Company direete that a seizure bee made thereof in the name of the Earle of Bedford and the 3 Trustees and sell it in theire names to any that will buy it and the Companie will make good the sale and they desire you to take care to prohibite and interrupt any person or persons that shall attempt to carry it away without your leave or permission.

**63. 12<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 136)** And that they have no account from Kelsey of a list of the Scotch prisoners and which is likely to bee preduditall unto them in regards they are required once a month to give account of them to the Councell.

**64. 14<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 138)** The Companie have received a list from Kelsey of the Scotts and are greatly

dissatisfyed to finde therein that there are seaven run away and intreat you to speake to Kelsey and Johnston in it and to give then order that they send Hue and Cry after them that they may bee apprehended and punished according to Law.

**65. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 140)** the Companie will take that into consideration and doe what shall bee reasonable but for Newell whose Christian name they desire to bee sent up to be made exemplary and the other mutinous persons the Companie is resolved not be bee forced to any satisfaction whatsoever by tumults and ryotts but instead thereof shall without delay endeavour to bringe the riotous to condigne punishment wherein the Companie would have taken present cause if you had sent up the names of the rioters which they desire you would doe by the next and to send up one or two make oath of the circumstances of the ryott.

**66. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 141)** There is an order of parliament made this daie that is death without mercy for any of the Scotts which run awaie and it is now printing, and it shall be sent you. By the superintendent and the Company expecte that Kelsey and the provost marshall Johnston take care for retaking such as are or shall run away that justice may bee done.

**67. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 144)** Ordered that 500 copies of the order or resolve of parliament made the 19<sup>th</sup> of November last past touching the Scottish prisoners bee forthwithe printed att the charge of the Companie and they are to bee dispersed all over the Leuell and fixed upon some convenient place in every towne to the intent that justice may bee done and marshall law executed upon all such Scotch prisoners as are taken for runninge away in pursuance of the order of Parliament and Mr Jessop is to pay to a marke for printing the said order.

**68. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 145)** The Company have sent you herewith the printed notes of parliament for hanginge up the Scotch prisoners which run away and there is an acte coming out speedily which doth punish all that receive, retayne or entartayne them which shall sodainly bee sent downe. In the meanetyme the Companie desire you to call on Sergeant Kelsie to be very stricte and carefull on such as remayne and to see if any escapes may be recovered and brought to punishment.

**69. 26<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 146)** Ordered that a letter bee written to Mr Hamond as followeth - The Companie received your letter of 24 instant and doe very much wonder you have not received a letter from them of the 11<sup>th</sup> instant which was then sent by James Cuthbert a Scotch prisoner who was entartayned upon the recommendation of Colonel Martyne and Mr Challoner two parliament men. The letter consisted of several heade. I have sent you a copie thereof here enclosed and the Companie desire you most espetially to persue the directions given therein, touching the cutting up of turffe that so they may (if neede bee provide to a triall of law with such as are obstinate and does refuse the delivery thereof).

**70. 1<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 150)** The Companie desires to heare some newes touchinge the Scotts and how they doe behave themselves.

**71. 8<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (p. 153)** For that which concerns breaking hegges by Scotts and dikers they have nothinge to doe with it, the Law beinge open to them as well as others and the Companie will mynd with the Country to have any such misdemeanors punished.

**72. 14<sup>th</sup> January 1652 (p. 166)** The Companie received your [letter] as for the turffe they have [witt] to Cambridge to have Stephens arrested and for future prevention of the like wronges the Companie hope the letter from the Lieutenant Generall now sent by Mr Walker will bee effective. The Companie are glad to heare the justice done upon the Scotch prisoner. And for the {rioting} by the English dikers they desire you to see them prosecuted effectively. And for Johnson rather to have him confynned over to the next assizes than endite him at the County Sessions and the Companie shall before that tyme advise of a sound way for bringing him to consigned punishment. For stealers of planks the Companie herewith sent you downe several writs for arrestinge of them and if you thinke fitt you may endite them also. The Companie wonder they have noe account from Kelsey of the number of Scotts that are run awaie in regard they are obliged once a month to give an account to the Councill of State. They desire great care may bee taken in the pursuinge and apprehendinge such as run away. The Companie desire you to come to some speedy agreement with

those through whose lands they have cutt and especially with those of Over and Mepall who are very clamourous here against the Companie.

**73. 21<sup>st</sup> January 1651 (p. 169)** As to the runninge away of the Scotts the Companie say they feare there hath not byn that care used in keepinge of them nor inpursuing after them when they are run away as should have byn. And for preventing theirie running away for the future they shall take what care they can here about by obteyninge further orders from the parliament and Councell. In the meaneytyme they thinke the best way to make them all engage one to another as you propose but they thinke it not fitt to remove them from the hard worke but to encrease their wages the more to encourage them to goe on. The Companie as to Johnson had thought to have moved the Generall to have him tryed at a Court of Warre for his life but seeing the course of robust justice hath taken place, they will forbear the course yet the busines beinge of so great weight they have not resolved what further course to hath concerninge him.

**74. 4<sup>th</sup> Feb (p. 174)** And as to the papers enclosed, as well the information against Billingham for entising away the Scotch prisoners as the other two petitions the Companie are not agreed what course to take but they intend some speedy course and for the present they are resolved to lett them suffer.

**75. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1652 (p. 207)** And doe desire that by the next to send them up a list of the Scotch Prisoners.

**76. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1652 (p. 225)** The Companie desire to know upon what growndes Mr Latch and Mr Drewry (as we are informed) gave leave to George Hume and James Hewston two Scotch prisoners to goe into Scotland. And with all the know the reason why the clothes sent downe were not delivered out to all such Scotch prisoners as doe want clothes and are willinge to worke.

**77. 9<sup>th</sup> August 1652 (p. 252)** The information of John Kelsey given in to the Companie as followeth - that Mr Drewry give order to {Mr Jaxon} to stop 3d apeice and some 6d apiece expense for bringinge of the Scotts money to discharge theirie quardes whereupon (as hee concedes) many of them ran away.

## Other references

**78. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1651 (p. 16)** Whereas the Companie moved Sir Cornelius Vermuyden that hee would bee present in person upon the workes and give then assurance that presently hee goe in hand with the making the indreynes and carryinge awaie the severall brookes to the downfall and take espetiall care to further navigation according to the Acte of Parliament whereupon the said Sir Cornelius Vermuyden desires leave of the Companie to bee absent at London for 10 days onely upon his urgent occasions. In the meantime he hath promised to take order for the lockspittinge<sup>1</sup> all the South Side of Bedford river which hee intends to doe before hee takes his journey towards London.

**79. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1651 (p. 17)** Ordered that all deales and wheelebarrowes shall be brought in and placed in a stone howse at Salters Lode or elsewhere. And every Mr [master] workeman upon taking out his number of wheelebarrowes and planks shall give his receipt of such number of wheelebarrowes and planks as hee shall have occasion to use in the works undertaken by him. And shall likewise require of every worksman under him a retorne of such barrows and planks. And in case any of them retorne not the said barrows and planks to the said Mr [Master] workemen or bee waiting they may reteyne so much of theirie paie until restitution bee made of the said wheelebarrowes and planks.

**80. 7<sup>th</sup> May 1651 (p. 45)** That the great banke of Bedford river being let out and began so that there is a necessity that it must be finished this Somer. And therefore to advise him to consider with Mr Burton whether in this want of materrialls of plankes and barrowes and the great charge required to finish the while lyne therewith it may not bee so much cheeper and more expeditious where there is want of barrowes and plankes to use wicker baskets for the carryinge of earth as they doe in many places in Norffolke and as the doe generally for the raising of fortifications which the Companie upon a full debate doe believe will conduce much to theirie profit and advantage.

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1. A narrow trench dug to mark out a boundary or to indicate lines of work in construction or civil engineering projects

**81. 9<sup>th</sup> May 1651 (p. 47)** Answer to a letter received from Mr Culpepper bearinge the date 5<sup>th</sup> April 1651

- touching the imbesellinge of materials the Companie would have a watch sett night and day especially about the rivers and on Sabbath daie
- touching the reducinge overseers they hope if upon search they find any unnecessary or unfitt to be employed that they have allready eased them of any such unnecessary charge accordinge to the instructions. And that they would for the future reduce their number
- that according to a former letter hee would expressly send up word whether it bee exprest in the contracte the tyme of finishinge Bedford South bancke
- that care bee taken to make the bancke proportionable and as well to take the proportion of bancke as river and that the banke may not bee made hollow

**82. 28<sup>th</sup> May 1651 (p. 55)** Ordered that a letter bee sent unto Sir Cornelius Vermuyden to this effecte that the Companie understandinge that hee hath given order for calling of the workemen from perfecting the several indreynes on the north side of Bedford river and for settinge them on works on the south banke which if not finished by the ende of October next they thinke fit to intimate unto him that it might bee lett alone then taken in hand for there will be a double prejudice {redoward} to the Companie.

**83. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1651 (p. 75)** A petition was delivered to the Companie in the names of {directors}, gents, master workmen and labourers many of them beinge put in the great level Anno Domini 1641 shewing that £5000 or thereaboute was due from Mr Latch unto them for worke done att that tyme in the late kings undertaking and praying some speedy course may bee taken for their pay because security was taken from Mr Latch to that purpose.

**84. 17<sup>th</sup> July 1651 (p. 84)** Whereas the Companie taking into consideration the severall orders formerly made for perfecting the works on the northside of Bedford river and finding the same have not byn observed to theire great prejudice and disadvantage it is now agreed and ordered that the workes on the north side of Bedford river shall bee with all possible effecte proceeded in and fully perfected with that they may bee and that the same may not bee hindered with the works now in hand on the south side of Bedford river. It is thought fitt that for some tyme stop bee made of the greatest part of the works of the south side that those on the north side may bee the better {intended} and accordingly the Companie here present doe order that upon the next pay dayes which are to bee upon Thursday and Friday next on the South Bank that all the workemen shall bee taken from there save what shall bee employed on the part of the south banke which lyes nere Well and Welney contynuinge about 1800 rods which is to bee povided so farre as £500 a weeke will goe and noe farther for 6 weekes from the said pay day. And all other workemen whatsoever are wholy to bee employed on works of the north side of Bedford river untill the Companie shall take further order. And it is hereby ordered that the Expenditor accordingly from the said pay day doe paie no somme or sommes of money whatsoever for any works on the South side of Bedford river save the said £500 a weeke the first payment whereof hee is to make upon the 26th day of Aug and not before and that all other moneys whatsoever which hee shall receive for the Companie hee shall paie towards the works of the northside so far as those works require the same and hee is to pay the said workmen on the north side once every fortnight without fayle and the expenditor is to have a copie of this order sent him forthwith and Mr Hamond another and likewise Mr Burton who is hereby required to see the workmen disposed of according to the intent and meaninge of this order.

**85. 14<sup>th</sup> August 1651 (p. 105)** Ordered that Mr Adams and Mr Henley bee desired to draw up an Acte of Parliament for making it felony to cut the bankes of the great levell of the fennes as in the {Modike} Banke at Marshland and that the parliament would forth with passe the same.

**86. 29<sup>th</sup> August 1651 (p. 105)** Whereas Sir Cornelius Vermuyden hath from tyme to tyme received severall orders from the Companie as well orders of Comptroll as therewise for the speedy perfectinge of the workes on the north side of Bedford river and not to enter upon the doinge of the works on the south side untill the works on the north side thereof were finished. Not notwithstanding all which the Companie have lately received a letter from him whereby hee presseth to have works on the south side of Bedford river to goe on whereupon the Companie taking the said into consideration and finding that the six weekes tyme lymitted in their order of the 17 July last for the doinge that part of the south side of Bedford river about Well and Welnea is now expired and that the north side thereof is so farre from beinge finished and

perfected in the division and indikes as that the same are hardly begun this yeare also beinge farr spent which hath byn occasioned through the eager prosecution of the works on the south side Bedford river contrary to the severall orders of the Companie as afore said contrary to diverse orders of Comptroll forbidding the same. All which at longe debate the Companie takinge into consideration doe resolve to adhere to their former orders for the goinge on and perfecting the severall workes on the north side of Bedford river before any prosecution be made of the workes on the south side. And therefore doe accordingly hereby order that all the workmen whatsoeuer that are employed on the workes of the south side of Bedford river shall from hence forward forbeare to worke any longer on the workes of the southside untill the division and indikes and other workes on the north side of Bedford river bee perfectly finished. And it is further ordered in pursuance thereof that the expenditor issue out noe money whatsever towards the workes on the south side of Bedford river or any part thereof untill the workes on the north side thereof bee done. And here of the Companie doe expecte a vigorous prosecution by all their officers employed in the great level of the Fennes. And the Company doe hereby desire the members of Comptroll to take this order in their consideration and make some order therein to bee sent downe to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden.

**87. 28<sup>th</sup> September 1651 (p. 110)** Whereas the Companie having had certaine intelligence that the workes on the north side of Bedford river are now in a very good forwarding which were formerly very much delayed doe here by thinke fitt and order that the workes on the south side of Bedford river bee forthwith taken in hand and in perticular that the workemen employed in bottoming the new river to begin at first with a peece of that river that is to say from Salters Lode as high as Welches dam and afterwards to be employed on the other workes on the south side of the Bedford river. And forasmuch as the Clarke, Comptroller and overseers have not persued their orders and instructions of the Companie to their great prejudice it is thought fitt and further ordered that the Expenditor doe forthwith make staie of their respective salaryes untill further order inclosed in a letter made to them by the Company.

Ordered that Mr Henley retorne thanks to Mr Thurloe and Mr Hamond for their care of their affayres and send the aforesaid order inclosed in a letter unto them for bottominge of the new river.

**88. 28<sup>th</sup> October 1651 (p. 123)** But they are not so much satisfyed touchinge the cariage of some other of their officers, perticularly Mr Burton who by his clandestyne bargaines with his favorites Rowland Borrowes and Sherman hath so much injured the Companie that notwithstandinge their servyce the Companie hope to finde tymely relief. But the present have resolved that noe contracte by him shall bee made good further than the stricte letter of their order whereby they doe not onely intend to take of your charge of back floores (the payment whereof they doe utterly disallow) but shall take all other lawfull advantages for their relieve. They remayne also very much dissatisfied touchinge Mr Palmer who hath certified (and they are enformed) the good carriage of the under overseers to the expenditor as an inducement to procure their salary and yet certified afterwards that they had fayled in their duty, not that the Comapnie doe hereby intend to approve any payment to the under overseers upon his certification (for they desire you forthwith to acquaint Mr Tench that neyther in this perticular nor in any other hee gives any allowance upon account but according to the stricte orders of the Companie) and to lett Mr Palmer bee sensible of his miscarriage in this as some other of the Companie afayres. The Companie did understand by Mr Thurloe that all the overseers were discharged and that they had noe officers upon charge in the works but the expenditor, the chiefe overseer, the surveyor, the undersurveyour, the clarke comptroller and two clarke of materialls besides Kelsey and Johnston which they were very well approve and have ratified the discharge by their order.

**89. 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1651 (p. 127)** Upon readinge a letter from Mr Hamond of 30<sup>th</sup> October last it is ordered that an answer bee sent by the messenger unto him as followeth on the behalfe of the Companie - The Companie have taken your letter into consideration and first for the business of the backe floore the Companie doe understand that they are not obliged by any contracte with Mr Burton but that which is in writinge accordinge to their orders {then} are informed that by the contracte in writinge the river was to bee made 111 foote wide of that 75 foote to bee 6 foote deep the residue too foote deepe and the banckes to bee 60 foote in the seate and 12 foot high and twelve foote in the top and this at 4d the rod some and other at higher rates and this bargaine in writinge is that only the Companie are obliged to. If Mr Burton hath made any other verball contracte it is fit hee makes it good and if the men they call Takers have agreed with under workemen to make floores at any rates it is very fitt those takers make first good their agreement with those under workemen with whome the Companie have nothinge to doe and it would bee very unreasonable that

the takers in former bargaines where contractes have byn made at one rate and they put it out at  $\frac{1}{2}$  and some tymes at too thirds of the price and the Companie make good the first contracte with the takers that now in this case the takers should put us to paie the under workemen and they put out money in their purses therefore the Companie doe desire that you onely treat with the Takers according to the contracte in writinge pursuinge the Companie orders and yet give the under workemen the best assistance you can against the takers letting the workmen know that the takers are the men who abuse them and make the Companie paie excesssive rates which those Takers put in their purses and in case of clamours or mutinye or feare of it the Companie desires you to gett assistance by some soldyers from Lyn and if neede bee the Companie will procure some orders from here to quiet all their mutinies nevertheless the Companie is not to resolute in this point of back floores but that if hereafter it shall appeare to them that the Companie have byn fayrely dealt with by the Takers and Mr Burton and that they finde that there is equity upon circumstances against the Companie they will be ready to take the same into consideration and appoint some purposely to treat with the takers thereabouts for the Companie have nothing to doe with the workmen in it, onely desire you to take care as farre as you can in way of friendly assistance that such money as is paid by the Companie accordinge to the written contracte may bee distributed among the under workemen who did the worke and the Companie doe believing if it were materiall that if it bee cast up what the banke comes to at two shillings the floore (and much worke was done at lesse) it will appeare that the money payable by the written contracte will be sufficient to paie for the bancke at the dimensions agreed upon and if theire bee five foote abated in the seate of the bancke from the written contracte then must the Companie have an abatement for the proportion from the price of the written contracte pro rata from the takers but in no fact to have any thing to doe now with the workmen. For overseers though the Companie bee informed that there were but 3 overseers for all Bedford river in the late Earle of Bedfords tyme and they were in hope that Mr Moore and his man and Mr Palmer would have byn sufficient yet in regard you mention the finishinge the bancke and bottome of the new river within a month and the attendance at Vermuydens Eau and the dam at Salters Lode. The Companie doe give liberty to you to name overseers for a monite not exceedinge five to continue for a month but not to put in any which the Companie have formerly disallowed and they desire you would use your best husbandrie for the Companie in theire sallaries and not give cause of exception to Kelsey who is a carpenter and an engineer and a diligent and ingenious man. For the materialls the Companie understands there are two overseers of them allready and they expecte they should looke after the imbezilling of them.

**90. 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1651 (p. 129)** Ordered that the Clarke write a letter to Mr Hamond to this effecte - The Companie not having tyme on Monday night to goe through all partes of your letter did this daie take into theire consideration the last part of thereof which mentioned the payment of money differing much from your former letter but you mention in your last the payment of more money than in your former but upon computation of the somes the payments in your former is more than in your latter and the Companie desire to have some explanation and they remayne unsatisfied with £32 10s mentioned for additionall allowance and desire you would not give allowance of more than the contracts made in pursuance in the Companie orders and doe not thinke fitt to give any allowance of what was done by Sir Cornelius Vermuydens order for the new taking up of the works for they apprehend that Sir Cornelius hath the power of Director in such sort as by his articles but hath not nor was ever intended to have any power of intermeddlinge in the puttinge out or directing the Companie payments or employing any offices in reference to the overseeing or paying of any works. And the Compane notified you to desire Sir Cornelius Vermuyden to forbear anythinge further than in his part of direction of works and information of the Companie whether the works been made according to direction for so is the Companies order. The Companie have cause to feare that Mr Glosonne and Christian may gett too much money into theire handes before there works bee done and it is noe small prejudice to the Companie that the Takers of works get still before hand with the Companie and if the works bee insufficient the Companie are forced to an after game which they rather mention at this tyme upon feare least the Dam at Salters Lode should prove insufficient upon the experience thereof this winter.

**91. 10<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 134)** Whereas the Companie now present taking into theire consideration the many works that were directed to bee done the last yeare by Sir Cornelius Vermuyden and let without the notice or approbation of the Companie or the Comptroll which hath put the Companie to many great inconveniences and fearinge the like prejudice for the future the Companie therefore desire those members of the Companie whoby the articles have the Comptroll of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden if in theire judgement they shall so thinke fitt to give order to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden accordinge to the power given them not to directe any worke without theire notice and approbation and

that hee doe a certaine daie by them to bee present or signifie to them in writing the peticular works by him designed for the next yeare with the estimate of the charge that so the Companie beinge informed from them thereof may tymely apply themselves for the undertaking and perfecting the said.

**92. 14<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 138)** The order which is sent unto you by the Committee of Comptroll, the Companie desire you would take espetiall care to have it with all possible speed sent to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden the contents thereof as the Companie apprehend very much concernes theire service. They conceive it best that this messenger that bringes it to you bee dispatched with it to him, who is directed to deliver it to his owne hands to the ende he may make affect of the delivery thereof. The Companie were glad to heare by your last that the great worke upon new Bedford was so neare finished and hope by your next to heare that river is wholy bottomed and they desire you to enforme them peticularly thereof and in what condition Christianne is with his great sasse and Glassonne with his dam. And further enquire concerning that report that Christian should delay his owne worke on purpose to prejudice Glassonne.

**93. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 140)** Upon reading of a letter from Mr Hamond of the 17<sup>th</sup> instant it is ordered that an answer bee sent unto him per expresse as followeth -The Companie received your letter of the 17<sup>th</sup> instant. And as to that part which concernes the new river and the question of backe floores they commanded me to return you this answer that they are very sensible how much they have byn abused in that business by the originall contracte which Burton made for that worke in so much hast, and when it seemes it was under water. It appeares that the Takers by the written contract were to make that river and bancke at theire full dimension for £4 a pole and there is noe mention of any allowance for backe floores or otherwise. They are satisfied how much they were over reacht Burton using his owne judgement or rather act therein refusing at the same tyme the advice and direction of those the Companie did then entrust for theire affayres in the Country. And they cannot thinke themselves att all bound to make good any verball contractes or additions to contractes made by Burton or any other without theire authority which by your letter and the proofes mentioned appearre to bee the case of the backe floore and therefore as to them can say no more yet for so much of the river as is bottomed and there wants earth to make up the banks to the full proportion for the supply thereof backe floores will be brought in and the takers have not byn mutinous they are willing to referre the whole matter to persons chosen on both sides whether the Company is to make any further allowance for the same for the Companie desire not to bee theire owne judges and where the bottome is not yet brought out they conceive noe demands of further allowance can bee made thereupon because it appears not what earth will yet bee required to make up the bancke but when that is done without mutiny the Companie will take that into consideration and doe what shall be reasonable.

**94. 21<sup>st</sup> November 1651 (p. 144)** Upon reading of a letter from Sir Cornelius it is ordered that a letter been sent unto him to this effecte viz - The Companie are glad to heare that the danger threatened by his former letter is over and they earnestly desire that all possible expedition may be used in bottoming and openninge of the new river that it may better bee enabled to receive the next flood that shall come downe and the Companie will joyne with him in his good wishes for the successe of the workes.

**95. 24<sup>th</sup> November 1651 (p. 145)** The Companie received your [Hamond] letter of the 22<sup>th</sup> of this instant and are sorry to heare the mischance in blowing up the banke but more sorry to heare that the tunnells in the north bancke were not made according to theire former direction. They are not able at this distance to give any directions for the takinge the breach or provide for carryinge away that water which is alreadye come downe but must leave it to your care who are upon the place and should bee glad to heare some good newes thereabouts.

They heare nothinge yet of taking up the dams and lettinge Vermuyden's Eau: run and yet they heare that March river is brim full and if a sodaine flood come will endanger the north Levell and therefore desire you special and speedy care therein but the Companie doe not understand what you meane by opening Vermuyden's Eau for some tyme to see the experiment thereof. The Companie heare that Henley's Eau doe not yet run and would willingly heare the reason thereof and likewise that reason of streitening the old Ouse at Erith which they apprehend must be the reason of the late breach. They recomend to you spetiall care the preservation of the sluice pitt by Salter's Loade and hope the bargaine with Christianne for lettinge the sluices by the first of August will cause him to use double diligence, serving his neglecte and default hath turned so much to the Companie's prejudice and above all the care of the north level must not bee

neglected and tendinge there to the cleare openninge of old Bedforde river which the Companie understand hath byn damed up hardby the old sluice which if contynued the Companie cannot understand how the riverletts and downfall of the northside of Bedford river shall be vented and once againe they command and to mynde you of serving the tunnells in the north banke and desire to have a speedy account what course is taken for ventinge the water which is come into the new Ouse.

**96. 1<sup>st</sup> December 1651 (p. 149)** The Companie received your [Hamond] letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> November last and since you have for the present deserted the dam the Companie desire you to take care of servicing the tunnells on the north bancke that the north levell may be put out of danger. The Companie wrote formerly to you to bee informed how much of the new river wanted its bottom and having received nothinge in answer there unto they desire that by the next you would lett them know how much of the river is unbottomed and in what places.

**97. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1651 (p. 150)** Ordered that a letter bee sent to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden in answer to his two letters received yesterday by Cambridge carriyer as followeth viz - The Companie have received both your letters and thenceby the ill newes of a breach in the north bancke of Bedford river and if the truth be as the Companie are informed that the bancke was a perfecte bancke In the place where it broake and that it happened neither by negligence nor willfullnes which they hope you will strictly enquire into. They can say nothinge to it at present more than desire that the place may be well served for the future, onely the Companie are much afraid that the makinge the 12 foote so nere it on the south side thereof was a great reason of this breach and that it is very worthy to bee considered whether that dike will not keepe that banke all along from Welches dam to Salters Lode under a perpetuall hazard and it is desired that you would take it into your consideration and give the Companie some satisfaccion in it. And they differ from you in the opinion that if the new river had been bottomed, this had byn prevented, but on the contrary that if all the water of ouse had byn put between the bankes at this tyme this breach had byn fatall to us that it would have drowned the whole north Levell. For that it is dangerous for men to meddle in busines that have not the whole fabricke of the busines in their heades, they agree with you in, and feare they have had the experience of it too much alreadly for certainly if they that had the management of the workes on the south side in the beginning of the last yeare had considered all the circumstances, they conceive they had not byn engaged into so many inconveniences nor the worke on the new river so ill ordered that the lower ende thereof is yet to doe which should have byn first done, and if the lower ende of that river had first byn begun and bottomed up as high as Welches dam and then cutt crosse into the old Bedford river the floodes might have byn so ordered by letting some of the water run through the nyne holes that you might have wrought all the winter upon that part of the new river which is between Welches dam and Erith.

**98. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1651 (p. 151)** Ordered that a letter bee written to Mr Hamond as followeth viz - the Companie received your letter of the last of November past and doe apprehende that the making of the 12 foote dreyne so nere the bancke on the south side was a great occasion of this breach and therefore they desire you to search that dreyne through out whether it may not bee of dangerous consequence to the said bancke and satisfy the Companie therein. And whereas Sir Cornelius Vermuyden writes of allowing {} a floore to the workmen the Companie thinke it unreasonable and doe therefore desire your opinion in it before any order bee made in it. And they likewise desire you to consider of the pay days and take care to order them for they may be for the best advantage of the Companie and their works. But the new bank beinge as it is overflowen on both sides the Companie is concerned that noe great matter can bee layed out their upon for the present. The Companie doe hope that by this tyme the banck is taken and all things succeede well and doe relye upon your selfe to have an eie to the serving all that part on the north side that the same may bee effectually done and that the Companie may bee fully assured thereof.

**99. 10<sup>th</sup> December 1651 (p. 155)** The Companie are very solicitous and very much unsatisfied untill they heare that the breach at Wellnea is taken and all that north banke well serviced for they are very fearefull that unles some speedy course bee taken for the direction of the water of ouse or giving it some larger passage their may happen some breach againe about Erith which may prove very prejudiciale to the north side of Bedford river.

**100. 12<sup>th</sup> Jan 1652 (p. 166)** Ordered that a letter bee sent to Colonell Thomas Cassell as followeth - Sir I am commanded by the Companie of Adventurers to signifie unto you that they have complied with the desire of the Isle of Elie and have procured an order under the Lieutenant Generall and have directed to Captain Foogall one of the Captains named in

your letter for removal of his Companie to Ramsey Woodwalton and the parts adjacent in the County of Huntington there to quarter untill further order.

**101. 21<sup>st</sup> January 1652 (p. 169)** Sir the Companie not having any news of bottominge of the new river which should have byn done ere this they desire you to send a man on purpose of thither to take a view thereof and give the Companie an account how much is yet to doe and in what places.

**102. 4<sup>th</sup> February 1652 (p. 173)** Ordered that Mr Thurloe bee desired to goe along with Colonell Thomas Cashell to the Lieutenant General Fleetewood to procure some order for the removal of the number of soldyers that are now quartered in or neare Haddenham to bee quartered att innes and victualling houses and not in private houses which is a {burden} to the Country.

**103. 4th Feb 1652 (p. 173)** I received yours [Hamond] of 3<sup>rd</sup> February from Wilburton together with the papers enclosed which were read over yesterdaie and to that part there of which concernes the bottoming of the new river and the difference of opinion between Mr Burton and Mr Welsh, the Companie doe agree with Sr Cornelius direction and by noe means doe consent to the cutting of the north bancke of Bedford river and therefore approve of your direccion the other way.

**104. 11<sup>th</sup> February (p. 176)** For as much as the speedy perfectinge of the new river doth very much concern the Companie it was proposed in order there unto that the north bancke of the Bedford river may bee opened at or below Welnea in one or two places there of that the water may issue that way by a tonnell into Bedford River. Upon some debate touchinge the same it was at length resolved that one tonnell shall be layed in the north bank of the Bedford River at or below Welmore of 3 foote broad 2 foote high and 40 foote long and another tonnell of the same breadth height and length shall bee sett below this tonnill towards Salters Loade if Sir Cornelius Vermuden and Mr Hamond shall thinke it necessary. And Sir Cornelius Vermuyden is to take espetiall care that these two tonnells bee made so sufficient as they may noe way prejudice the Levell on the north side of Bedford river in case a sodaine flood should come downe.

**105. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1652 (p. 206)** The Companie are glad to heare there was a paie daie at Sutton and that you spent 3 daies in attendinge the pay because it is here enformed that in some places there hath not byn a pay daie in 14 some say 19 weekes together in so much as the reason of the ill paie tis enformed the workmen doe disert theire worke and will doe more for others for 10d then for the Companie for 16d. The Companie should have byn glad to have heard the new river has byn bottomed but they are sorry that after so many promises that river does not yet run they desire all possible expedition may be made for the bottominge thereof by removinge all trunks rootes of trees and other obstructions whereby the navigation may be prejudiced.

**106. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1652 (p. 208)** That all the Companie officers now in sallary bee with all convenient speede discharged other than Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, the director, Lieutenand Colonel Underwood the expenditor who was lately contracted with and Mr Burton and such others as the Companie shall thinke fitt and such as are authorized by their instructions to all manage the Companie affayres in the Country.

**107. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1652 (p. 208)** That upon the south levell care bee had for the speedy finishing of the new river, that is to say for the bottoming of it and perfectinge the bancks, dams, sluices and all other matters incident there unto and that noe new worke bee undertaken or contracted for upon the south level till the said new river bee completed and due observation made and experience had of the running thereof and of the operation and effect of stopping the old owse.

**108. 6<sup>th</sup> May 1652 (p. 215)** The Company beinge informed that the earth remayninge and cast upon the south side of new Bedford river to supply the place of a foreland nere unto the dam by the Hermitage at Erith is very loose and false. And that in respecte their of and the uneven course of the river thereabouts the said earth will be in danger to be washt away to the prejudice and stopping ofthe said river. It is therefore referred to the superintendents to consider and advise how the said earth may be best served from washing into the said river by piles hurdles wazinge or otherwise and to give order for the speedie doing thereof accordinge as they shall finde most advantageous to the said river.

**109. 13<sup>th</sup> May 1652 (p. 218)** Ordered that Sir Cornelius Vermuyden doe take all possible care in settinge men on worke for the speedy finishinge of new Ouse and the next day after that river is bottomed to open the dam.

**110. 10<sup>th</sup> June 1652 (p. 227)** If upon reading of a letter from Mr Latch it is ordered that a letter bee sent unto the expenditor as followeth viz - The Companie have received information from below that their affayres have byn much obstructed, their owne reputation wounded and the life of their agents endangered through the clamour of workemen caused by pretence that there hath not been sufficient money in the Country to answer the emergencies of the pay days and that the workemen have byn put to much {attendance} and losse of tyme by reason of the proportion of money brought by the officers to the place of pay hath byn much short of what was necessary and by spetiall order to bee provided particularly that on the nineteenth of this instant £1500 beinge appointed to bee brought to Erith and Mr Dymond brought £800 which did not onely dismiss many of the people with great expense and dissatisfaction but also begot constinations that the cause of their non payment was from the Companie agents who were therefore exlaymed upon curst and threatened and might pished in the outrage. Of this the Companie have commanded mee give you notice and to put in minde that noe colour hath byn given for their pretence by a reall want of money you knowinge there hath byn constantly in your handes a surplusage above what was from tyme to tyme at the present necessary and therefore the cannot but thinke themselves ill dealt with by you not preventinge this mischief they looking upon you as the person chargeable and attributing this inconvenience to your owne default though happily the faylor did {impliarise} from the negleete of some by you entrusted. In this matter they expecte from you a speedy account which is all I have in charge at present.

**111. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1652 (p. 238)** Ordered that the Committee below bee desired to consider in what places the river of owse is fitt to bee bottomed and an estimate of the charge sent up and certifie their opinions.

**112. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1652 (p. 240)** Ordered that a letter be sent to Sir Cornelius Vermuyden as followeth viz - The Companie are enformed of complaint by the barge men which carry coles to Cambridge by reason that the new cutt at Russell Hill is so straight that the boates of 16 or 17 foote wide cannot passe as formerly and that the new cutt wants a bottome in some part of it which hinders boates of burden to passe and they therefore desire you to take it into your present care and to give such speedy order therein as there may bee noe just cause of complaint against the Companie. They heare that the worke is such forwarded as it will be fit for an adjudication this sumer but they desire to heare the same from you to whose care and judgement they have committed the designe and on whom they must depend to give satisfaction to the Companie therein when the business comes to a finall adjudication. If therefore you bee of opinion to demand a finall judgement of the whole level before the next terme they desire you to write to them what tyme the level will bee dreynd fitt for adjudication to the intent they may bee {suytable} to the Lordes Committee to appointe a tyme to come down and send them word before wednesay (by such a letter as they may shew to the Committee) that the Companie may make application accordingly for otherwise the Lordes Committee will adjourne on next Wednesay till the end of terme.

**113. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1652 (p. 246)** The Companie present taking into consideration the necessity of beinge upon the Levell in takinge a view of the works already made as well on the north as on the south side of Bedford river and likewise to see the operation of divertinge of new Owse have resolved to adjourne theirie meetinge into the levell and doe intend to meeate at Cambridge at the signe of the beare on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of August next.

**114. 9<sup>th</sup> August (p. 252)** The information of John Kelsey given in to the Companie as followeth:

That the bancks are very defective nere Salters Lode.

That the bancks between Erith and Mepall after they were flogged are very much prejudiced by the permission of cattle to goe thereon.

That hee desires to bee heard and enforme the Companie who have disposed of the Scotts and have had the benefit of their labours.

That John Kelsey haveinge found out many deales and plancks that were stolen away and acquainted Mr Drewry therewith hee employed them to his owne use.

In consideration that the said John Kelsey shall make good the information now by him given into the Companie touchinge severall abuses alledged to bee done unto them and defects in the works which he is ready to make good it is ordered that 10s bee allowed him for bearinge his charges in going downe to Cambridge for the purpose aforesaid and doe recomend him to the further consideration of the Companie att their meetinge att Cambridge and Mr Jessop is desired to pay the said 10s accordingly.

**115. 12<sup>th</sup> August 1652 (p. 255)** The Companie doe agree forthwith to goe to Russell Hill and to take view of the dam and the navigation to Cambridge to the intent they may satisfie themselves therein. The Companie doe advertise to meete again at the place aforesaid tomorrow morning by eight o clocke.

**116. 18<sup>th</sup> August 1652 (p. 270)** The names of such officers as are thought fitt to be employed besides the Superintendants, Comptroller, Director, Expendor and Receiver –

1) John Hopkinson – Clarke of the Companie, 2) Jonas Moore surveyor, 3) John Cooley, 4) Josias Arlibont, 5) William Palmer, 6) Thomas Browne Solicitor to the Companie, 7) Edmunds Welsh, 8) Hugh Ringwood, 9) Jeffery Hawkins, 10) Gro Barnes, 11) Robert Pinchbacke overseer of materials and keeper of the Sasse, 12) Thomas Moore - Clarke of the Contracts, 13) Arthur {assistant} to be comptroller who is to bee resident where the Comptroller is, 14) Two Scotch men messengers, 15) John Watts keeper of the Sasse att Stanground, 16) Henry Oliver keeper of the Clow.

Touchinge Richard Kendall an overseer it is referred to the meetinge at London to consider whether to appointe Mr Turner or the said Richard Kendall to looke to be banckes on the north part of the levell towards Croyland in regard the Companie apprehend that one man may doe that busines.

## Records from the State Papers of the Council of State

**117. 12<sup>th</sup> September 1651** Council of State to the Militia Commissioners of the counties where prisoners are, viz.: the four northern counties, York, Chester, Lancaster, Stafford, Derby, Leicester, Salop, Notts, Warwick, and to the Governors of Liverpool, Chester, and Carlisle, and all garrisons where prisoners are confined. It has pleased God, for completing this great victory against the Scots, to deliver up into your hands many prisoners daily, who escaped from Worcester, and there are numbers in countrymen's hands in your county; let them be diligently enquired after, and put in safe custody, and an exact list taken of them, on receipt whereof you will receive further order how they are to be disposed of. Examine all prisoners brought into your custody, as it may be of use upon their trial. [I. 96, p. 529.]

**118. 9<sup>th</sup> October 1651** So many of the Scotch prisoners, private soldiers, as are in Tothill Field, and also at York, and are sound and fit for labour, to be delivered to such officers as the Lord General shall appoint, to be delivered to persons appointed to receive them for the service of draining the fens; such as receive them to give security that they shall not depart five miles from the place where they shall be appointed to work, nor act anything to the prejudice of the commonwealth. [I. 23, pp. 24–25.]

**119. 10<sup>th</sup> October 1651** Order that—as Council appoint all the private soldiers of the Scotch prisoners in Tothill Fields, or at York, fit for labour, to be delivered to persons appointed to receive them for draining the Fens - security be given in 5l. for each man so delivered, on condition that the said prisoners shall not return into Scotland above the number of 10 per cent. within 12 months from date, and that the best endeavour shall be used by those to whom they are committed, that none shall go beyond Trent without the leave of those authorised to that purpose by Council or the Adventurers for draining the said fens, and that they shall not act to the prejudice of the present Government; any decrease to be certified monthly.

**120. 14<sup>th</sup> October 1651** The Scottish prisoners at Newcastle or Durham to be sent to Lynn, and delivered to the

Adventurers for draining the fens, upon the same terms as those at London and York, and they to give their answer within three or four days whether they will accept them.

**121. 18<sup>th</sup> November 1651** The allowance of 2½d. a day to be made to Scotch prisoners now at York or any other place, provided they be not made over to merchants, and the Committee of Prisoners to take care that this money be allowed; Mr. Strickland and Sir John Bourchier added to that committee.

**122. 19<sup>th</sup> November 1651** - That such Scotts Prisoners who have been placed or disposed of by the Parliament or Council of State, or by their Authority, or by any of the Officers of the Army, as have, or shall run away from the Places where they are so disposed, or go into Scotland without Leave or Licence had from the Parliament, or Authority under the Parliament, shall suffer Death, and shall be proceeded against by Martial Law, and punished with Death; And that Mr. Solicitor-General do prepare and bring in an Act to that Purpose.

**123. 28<sup>th</sup> November 1651** Ordered, That it be referred to the Council of State, to take into Consideration the Business of the Scotts Prisoners, that the common Soldiers have an Allowance of Four Pence per Day.

**124. 1<sup>st</sup> March 1652** Sir Arthur Hesilrigge to discharge all the Scotch prisoners under the degree of captain, who are not Highlanders, now at Durham, and give them passes for Scotland, they taking an engagement never more to bear arms against the commonwealth of England.

**125. 17<sup>th</sup> March 1652** Council of State to the Commander-in-Chief of the forces at Durham. We lately ordered you to dismiss the Scotch prisoners in restraint in the county, but on further consideration, we have thought fit that they should be detained till further orders. [l. 97, p. 222.]

**126. 18<sup>th</sup> March 1652** That an Act be brought in, for incorporating Scotland into one Commonwealth with England; for taking away and abolishing Kingly Power in Scotland, and all Laws and Oaths relating thereunto; and for the Punishment of such as shall endeavour the Restitution of Kingly Power in Scotland; or that shall oppose, or endeavour to subvert the Government established upon the said Union, or the Authority exercised in Scotland, in order thereunto, or in pursuance thereof.

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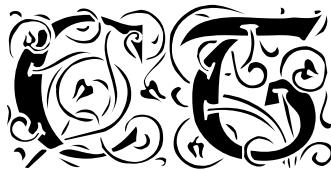
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A photograph of a wetland landscape. The foreground is filled with dense green reeds and aquatic plants growing out of a body of water. In the middle ground, a layer of water lilies with their characteristic purple flowers covers the surface. The background shows a distant shoreline with more vegetation and possibly some buildings under a clear sky.

# Dunure to Denver

by Jean Rees-Lyons



Dunure  
Greenan  
Glasgow  
Edinburgh  
Athelstaneford  
Linton  
Dunbar & Doon Hill  
Morpeth  
Newcastle  
Hadrian's Wall  
Durham  
York  
The Fens: Water Newton,  
Whittlesea, Sutton Gault,  
Mepal, Welches Dam,  
Earith & Denver

# Dunure to Denver



## Coventina's Quest into Hidden History

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## Special Acknowledgement



This story could not have been written without Barbara Grafton's attention to detail and diligent approach to research. Her specialist understanding of the use of data and of its purpose in prose writing is without compare. The breadth of creative synthesis between writer and mentor encouraged in National Lottery Heritage Fund criteria is demonstrated here.

These principles may be seen not only in the language of the narrator, Coventina, but also depicted in descriptions of the historical, fictionalised journey she takes on behalf of the Scottish soldiers to tell their story to new audiences for their new memory-making legacy.

I am indebted to Barbara, my experience of working with her has been extraordinary. It has enabled *Origins* to fulfill its project requirements of good practice by extending previous and new knowledge gained. *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History*, a human interest story authenticated by archive and scientific research, highlights the value of heritage and legacy-making which creates community cohesion and personal well-being.

Jean Rees-Lyons  
16<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## **Introduction**

### **Making Stories**

The concept of Coventina's story came to me during The Word Garden project initiatives in the East Anglia landscape known as the Ouse Washes. It is a privilege to discover, make connections, research and create stories with impact and significance. Furthermore, it is a fulfilling experience to develop opportunities for others to explore aspects of history in its many forms.

*From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History*, tells an almost forgotten, hidden history of how, why and who really did construct the Hundred Foot River, the second 21-mile-long cut in the landscape which mirrors the Old Bedford River. This waiting-to-be-told human interest story combined with scientific research, archive and creative arts activities culminated in a successful local legacy-making *Origins* project.

### **Stories of Scottish Soldiers**

During Coventina's imaginary journey from Dunure to Denver in search of her childhood dreams, she moves through historical time from Hogmanay 1651 to May 2018 and the re-interment of Tam's remains, to the present day. Her story foretells the construction of the Hundred Foot River, describes the transformation of the landscape, its consequences for people and places and, although rooted in real time, the action is told through historical time-slips to demonstrate the fusion of past, present and future.

The Word Garden's tried and tested multi-disciplinary methodology adopted in this story and in the film of the same name adapted from it, demonstrate a learning process which changes archive into action and legacy into learning. Text and copyright images, fully referenced, assist the learner, researcher and the historian legacy-maker to embark with confidence upon history exploration. The story represents project output, the reference section outcomes, which increase learning opportunities and highlight ways of achieving project objectives.

The narrator, Coventina, was drawn initially as a fictionalised character. During her journey she is transformed as archetype, a philosopher-traveller, historian, the soul of the landscape as she endlessly searches the washlands for Tam. She becomes a universal symbol of her time for our time.

Tam, a young, idealistic Covenanter survived the Battle of Dunbar only to die after his march to Durham Cathedral. We see his identity through 3D facial depiction. Now a "real" character in the story, he states, 'They will return... their descendants... not today to this foreign resting place but in years to come to honour us...' Here, we do honour them: everyone connected with the *Origins* project from archivist to archaeologist, researcher to writer, from transcriber to image-maker in film and photography, in song and psalms for Scottish soldiers.

Also, 15 black-tailed godwits released from Lady Fen, Welney Wetland Centre, now flying south, bear never-to-be-forgotten names from the *Origins* story, including Coventina, Tam, Doon, Unity and Heather, to name but a few. There could be no more appropriate symbol for the *Origins* project than this endangered species. They carry to new landscapes - in their names - a survival heritage story born in tragedy, their arduous flight symbolising the journey of the Scottish soldiers from Dunbar to Denver.

The aims of the *Origins* project will live on. Our research into hidden history, using the tools of legacy-making and the magic of archives, will enable current and future generations to create new heritage materials of universal value through community action and public engagement.

## Hogmanay 1651

He's alive, my Tam, he's alive. And not injured or sick, as many of the returning men are. My Ma says I have to help the old men and boys with the nets<sup>1</sup> as well as my house tasks, now all the fit men have gone. We'd heard stories of the Parliamentarian army killing soldiers at first light. Tam and his Pa, bound by their lifelong Covenanters' Oath to fight for life, liberty and religious freedom, marched away with our kinsmen to who knows where, to face a challenge beyond their ken. It was clear to us all that this family war would change our lives forever (fig. 2.1).<sup>2</sup>

I must find Tam. I've something to tell him.

Summer and autumn were hotter than usual; the smell of sun-dried heather hung in the air; our crops were failing, we had little to lay down for the harsh winter to come. The herring catch was small, and trouble broke out at the harbour between fishermen who risked their lives every day to feed villagers as well as the Laird. Storms destroyed many boats, and two children died on the beach before they could get home. Everywhere people were afraid and many were the whispered conversations about the Covenanters' plans now that Parliament's men were spreading across our lands.

Tam, Robbie, Duncan and many of the other men and boys spent much time in knife, staff and sword-play on the beach. One day Robbie caught Tam's forehead, cutting it open to the bone. Nana bathed it in salt water and placed cobwebs over it to stop the bleeding.<sup>3</sup> Tam is not a man to whine, not even when he had a huge swelling on a tooth that only eased when Nana used her bone bodkin to make the pus drain out.<sup>4</sup> Robbie's knife skills hurt Tam's pride and was a fine way for me to tease him.



fig. 2.1

I'll miss my Nana the most, more like a Ma to me than her daughter ever was. She has given me everything I will need for my journey, and her full blessing. She has told me where to find Aunt Lizzie who runs a tavern in Glasgow. Aunt's life was hard. She left Dunure as a young woman after her Ma died of typhus and her Pa fled in grief to Glasgow and the drink. She survived the plague in Paisley when I was a girl but her husband and five children were stricken and were carried out of town to the muir where they all died.<sup>5</sup>



fig. 2.2



fig. 2.3

Nana has confided in Hamish, the auldest of the elders, too old to fight. He tried to persuade me to stay, not break my Ma's heart, but when he saw he could not he told me where to find secret paths and bothies beyond Troon on the post road to Glasgow. My plans were made as Tam and our kinsmen set off on the march to fight for their country and as the autumn drought gave way to winter.

I will go by way of the Ley Tunnels from Dunure Castle to Greenan Castle like we used to (fig. 2.2, fig. 2.3).<sup>6</sup> We'd scramble and crawl some of the way through the narrow passages on our bellies in the dark. I felt a special kind of excitement then, being so close to Tam.

I had my first news of Tam from Robbie, one of the men returning from Glasgow with an ague or a flux. They had not yet met the Parliamentarian army as they had followed the secret tracks, sleeping in the old bothies along the way. I imagine Tam marching, then resting in the back room of an ale house where our kinsmen would argue tactics. They are safe, for now.

Robbie has brought me a heather keepsake folded in a scrap of parchment from Tam. I keep it close to my heart in a little skin pouch with my bone-handled knife, a last gift from Tam as he prepared to leave and join Leslie's regiment (fig. 2.4).<sup>7</sup> He was so proud that day in his blue knitted bonnet and prouder still to be in such a brave company of men and boys with their muskets, swords and pikes.<sup>8</sup> Flying free above them all was the unfurled standard that led their way (fig. 2.5).

I am leaving hame tomorrow, before dawn. Last night, I dreamed I stood at the edge of a ditch where Tam was lying in his own grave with broadswords, axes and other weapons and bones around his body, close to a stone keep. He loves to scare me, once pretending to lie as if dead on the beach at Doon Bay. When I came close, he scrambled up, laughing, and silenced my screams with kisses. That day he gave me a woven hemp ring which I always wear tight on my finger so it can never be lost, a sign of his love for me.

We stood for a long while staring into each other's eyes that day. Although born of different parents, our eyes are the same colour, a deep amber like some of the beautiful stones that wash ashore from the bay. I love looking into Tam's eyes, the right has a heart-shaped mark that no-one else could ever have. My Tam, with amber eyes like mine.



fig. 2.4



fig. 2.5

I wake well before sunrise, afraid, but happy when I hear the familiar sounds of the fishermen at the harbour. It is time to leave. Hardly daring to breathe, I creep from the warm curtained bed I share with my Ma and sister Ailsa.<sup>9</sup> Neither stir, and I cannot trust myself to give them a backwards glance.

Barefoot on the icy flagstones I wake Nana in her cot closest to the fire. Shivering, I dress in my travelling clothes over my shift: first my spare shift, then two woollen and linen petticoats and reed-stiffened bodice, knitted stockings, felt socks, thick sheepskin and leather boots, sheepskin mittens, and Nana's linen coif for my hair although by rights only married women should wear one.<sup>10</sup>

Then Nana wraps me up tight in her woollen plaid shawl passed down from her highland kin, holding me hard against her thin body, and we whisper together a prayer for my safe-keeping. Over all my other clothes we fling my dark hooded cape, the wool still rich with grease to keep me dry from rain or snow. Once my family know I am missing, then and only then, will Nana tell my Ma what we have done. By then, I will be well along the post road.

The pack on my back is laden with as much as I can carry of food, water in a skin, a spoon, bowl, a comb, and some coin. Most precious of all, in the pouch around my waist with Tam's knife, I am carrying my little wooden charm worn smooth by her journey to shore by sea and by loving hands (fig. 2.6).

Passed down from female to female in our line, from Nana to Ma, and then to me when I became a woman. I always hold her tight to my heart before I settle down to sleep, in my ritual asking for wisdom and strength in everything I do. The Kirk elders would brand me a witch if they knew, but my charm is only old driftwood and my family take great care to keep our rituals secret.

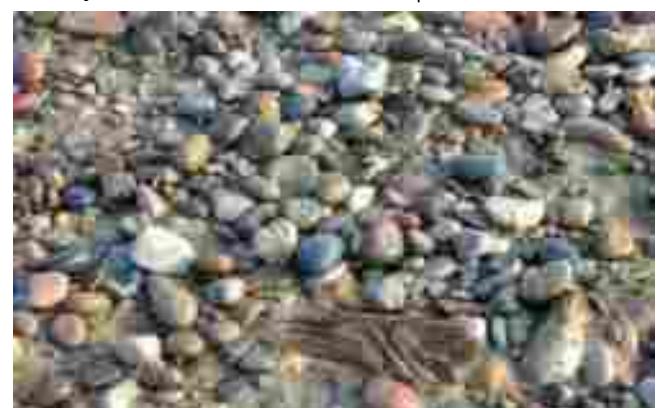


fig. 2.6

I crouch at the entrance to the tunnel. Without Tam it feels hostile, like a trap. I hold back for a long while, and only by thinking of how Tam can make me feel safe can I crawl forward onto the familiar dirt and stones. Further in, jagged flints snag at my clothes, but there is room there to stand up and hold onto the walls as my guide. I feel Tam is with me along these damp, dark passages. I fill my mind with memories, like the day we sailed around Doon Head from the shore at Craig Tara, boasting about surviving the danger of the rough waters. Like our families before we love the watery places more than we love the land (fig. 2.7).

At last, I reach daylight and sweet air at the secret exit from the tunnel. Taking my charm from my pouch to protect me, I am filled with certainty Tam and I will be united.



fig. 2.7



fig. 2.8

After a few draughts of water I press on, chewing slowly on fresh herring, oatmeal and dried mushrooms from my pack. As the sun rises higher I can trace the ancient tracks that will lead me to the post road and Aunt Lizzie.<sup>11</sup>

At first the walk feels easy, but my fears grow as I leave familiar places behind. I am not used to walking alone for such a long way and I start to wonder what chance I have of ever finding Tam. This is a dark time when my feet do not want to carry me on and I turn often to look back towards hame (fig. 2.8).

But, over and over, I tell myself I have to find Tam, come what may. Humming aloud

a rhythmic march to an ancient family song, '*let me with my ma be*', right, left, right: '*let me with my dear Tam be*' strengthens my will to go on. I vow then never to look back again.

I walk with the daylight, seek shelter and lay out Nana's tartan shawl at sunset. Holding my charm tighter than usual, I curl up and pray for sleep. Over the last few days, with all the walking and scrambling, my feet and legs hurt. I sleep little, the nights too chill and full of strange sounds. Yet, with each passing hour I feel I grow stronger and more certain of my quest. This morning, the third since I left hame, marked by the tiny pieces of grit I collect every day, I meet a family herding their geese and walk with them into Glasgow (fig. 2.9).



fig. 2.9

Being hugged so hard by dear Aunt Lizzie makes me remember my parting from Nana. I cannot help but weep for all I have left behind, what I have suffered on the journey, and how far I have yet to go. Aunt Lizzie takes me into the back room of her tavern where there are clean rushes on the floor, smoke-stained walls and a ceiling so low I can touch it. Best of all, there is a fire and a settle and, within minutes, I am greedily eating mutton boiled with tatties and neeps, with rough bread to soak up the juicy brown gravy.

With a full stomach, and soothed by firelight, I listen to Aunt Lizzie as she gives me news of our soldiers. Firstly, she tells me that most of the men from our village are alive, that they have been joined by many more from settlements further north and south, and that a few have run away to return to their crofts. I know that Tam and his Pa will never desert, and my heart leaps with the thought they are still unharmed. But Aunt Lizzie also tells of the hard battles that have already been fought, and she can name some who have died or been sent home.<sup>12</sup> Most worrying is the news that Parliamentarian forces had invaded Edinburgh last year after a major battle at a port called Dunbar, but Aunt Lizzie is comforting and tells me that I should expect no trouble in the town as all is now peaceful.

I have stayed two days at the tavern, on each morning adding another tiny flake of grit to my daily count. I help Aunt Lizzie as much as I can because the tavern is beside a coach stop and many travellers stay there for bed and board. This morning, it is time for me to leave. Aunt Lizzie has gifted me all I need for the next part of my journey: coin, dried herring, oatmeal, meat, kale and mushrooms, oat biscuits and coarse bread. She has told me of the places where she thinks I will find Tam. Most kind of all, she has paid for a place on the post coach to Edinburgh.

It is hard to leave. I know Aunt Lizzie wants me to stay, but she understands why I cannot and has given me her blessing and promised to send a message to my Ma that I am safe and well. As the coachman calls for me to hurry, I give her my word that Tam and I will return to Glasgow.

As an unexpected passenger, taken as a favour to Aunt Lizzie, my place is on the floor amongst the legs of those who can afford seats inside the coach. More unlucky passengers are out in the cold, wind and rain in the basket at the back (fig. 2.10).<sup>13</sup>

All but one of the other passengers are men, and they scare me with their leering gazes and uncouth talk. Bulky in all my clothes, my most precious possessions tied to my waist, and with my full pack, I squeeze as close as I can to the only other woman. She holds a baby in her arms and her swollen belly tells of another child to come.



fig. 2.10

The baby is a torment to us all. The woman cannot make it feed at her breast, nor take drops of water from her fingers. It will not be comforted, and only exhaustion silences it for a while before the screams begin again. Now the baby is making strange sounds, like a starving lamb. The woman cries as if her heart will break and then starts screaming while the child lies silent. One of the ruffian men tears the baby from her arms, pulls aside the leather curtain over the window, and throws the tiny body into the undergrowth by the roadside. In fear at what else he might do, I bury my head in my cloak and imagine the comfort of Nana's and Aunt Lizzie's arms around me.

We stop for the night at an inn where I take my supper of bread and cheese to the tiny room and cot I share with the woman from the coach. Neither of us want to talk and I cannot bear to hear about her troubles as I am miserable, afraid and homesick. Huddled beneath Nana's tartan, only my prayers and ritual can steady me for sleep and whatever tomorrow will bring.



fig. 2.11

I had never imagined such a place as Edinburgh (fig. 2.11). Not even Glasgow prepared me for the filth, stench and noise. Nor the crowds of people dressed in such colourful and strange costumes, the press of carts piled high with unfamiliar produce, and the animals that are everywhere being moved about in the chaos. As soon as the creatures drop their dung, rough-looking women and boys almost fight for their share of it. The coach came to its final stop outside an inn where I pay for a cot all to myself for two nights in a tiny space, little more than a cupboard, but warm and safe.

Parliamentarian soldiers are everywhere, standing out with their bold red uniforms.<sup>14</sup> Despite being afraid of them I want to explore. I tie my pack across my shoulders under my cloak, so I can pass for a hunchback, hide my face deep in my hood, and make my way through the crowds to the source of the greatest noise, a market and a fair.<sup>15</sup>

I know my eyes are staring like a frightened hare's. Everywhere, children running, shrieking, there a half-starved dancing bear, there a prancing man maybe mad or possessed, his lips spraying spittle. There pedlars with ribbons and trinkets, a man eight feet tall on wooden stilts, and a bearded woman laughing with a sailor.

There bloodstained stalls piled high with fish, meat and poultry. Everywhere, bawling sellers of ponies, cattle, hogs and pigs, ale, timber, coals, bundles of faggots and straw, earthenware, rushes and brooms. Piled high, too, stalls of bread, eggs and butter, cheese, milk and herbs. My head is spinning and I crouch against a wall for support. That is how I meet Jeannie Faw, the Egyptian or gypsy girl.<sup>16</sup>



fig. 2.12

I first see her feet, shod in good leather boots laced at the front, and the mud-soaked hem of her russet petticoats. Then her face, deep-tanned, leans towards me, her brown eyes questioning. I struggle to my feet, glad of her arm. We are eye to eye, one dark and the other pale, one strong and one weary to the bone (fig. 2.12, fig. 2.13).

She leads me hame to her family's wagon where I am welcomed for coney stew and a draught of ale. Her Ma and Pa, three brothers and two sisters all try not to stare too boldly at me. I tell them only that I am seeking a lost friend called Tam and have far to go.



fig. 2.13

Pa plays the pipes and the family dance just for me until all but Jeannie return to the fair to earn some coin. I have no wish to return to the crowds so, alone with Jeannie, I am spending the afternoon listening to her tales of journeys to places of pygmies and giants, animals with two heads, birds that can talk a hundred languages. Tales, too, of her people's journeys to these isles over centuries, fleeing war and other dangers. She tells me, too, of laws passed to oppress her kind, and how her family, all born in Scotland for several generations, are safer than many Egyptians from execution or banishment.<sup>17</sup>

She shows me the metalwork her family make: horse-trappings, brooches, rings and girdle clasps, decorations for sword and dagger hilts. Then more treasures: bowls and brooms, leather flagons, baskets, bark dyes, and horn spoons. They are wealthier by far than my own family so far away in Dunure, although my Pa works for the Laird and we are better housed, fed, shod and clothed than most in the village.

I have slept well enough in my tiny room at the inn for the last two nights, spending the days with Jeannie and her family at the fair. At first, I picked up any coin thrown for them as they danced and played the pipes. Now, I have grown surer of myself, so I join them in the dances. Jeannie and I have a special dance about night and day, our costumes and movements showing her dark and my light, her sorrow and my joy, her strength and my weakness. The crowds enjoy that dance the best of all and throw the most coin. Her family share the coin with me, refusing to take any for the food I enjoy in their lively company.



fig. 2.14

It is now the third and last day of the fair and I buy some firm white fish and three plump crabs as a parting gift for my Egyptian friends. Feeling rested in body and mind, once more I feel the pull to find Tam. Beyond my hopes, the family want to travel with me on the road to Dunbar.

We hitch two strong fresh ponies bought at the fair to the wagon, and take our leave of the town. The road is taking us within sight of a great dark castle on a hill (fig. 2.14) and I wonder at the marvels my journey has already shown me and those that lie ahead.

Clear of the town, we have begun to travel through deep forest. Alone, I would be frightened in the gloaming, but now I run around with Jeannie and her brothers and sisters, laughing like a child again, collecting wood, and helping as much as I can with finding food, snaring coney and pigeons. This evening, I will cook a rich stew of fish, crab, vegetables and herbs, my Nana's feast-day recipe.

Last night, we all slept in the wagon like herring packed in barrels, as cosy as birds in moss-lined nests. This morning, chores done, Jeannie, her Ma and sisters are teaching me to weave baskets, although my fingers are clumsy and they laugh at my crooked offerings. Putting aside the rushes, I have more skill at making dyes from tree bark, and at pounding leaves, seeds, herbs and spices and rolling them into tablets with honey and other ingredients entirely new to me.<sup>18</sup> Jeannie knows many names for each one, in languages learned by her family over generations of travelling through lands such as Greece, Persia and Syria.

As we work, I learn which herbs are best for sleeplessness, headache, toothache, belly ache, childbirth and fever. Jeannie wraps some of each tablet into tiny cloth bundles for me, warning of the deadly effects of taking too many: coldness, itching, dizziness, confusion, drowsiness and maybe even death.

I am given lessons from the menfolk, too. Pa and his sons teach me about the stars and how to use them for navigation. When they see I am tiring, they teach me ballads, and how to build shelter in a wood. It is a hard lesson for me that I am just an ignorant country girl while this Egyptian family has wisdom about everything.

We have been travelling now for many days, stopping often along the way to rest the ponies and to trade goods and entertainment for coin and food. These places will stay in my memory as will all the times I have felt safe and happy with my Egyptian friends. Jeannie and I have grown very close, telling each other our secrets and dreams and the things we wish for in our lives. I want only a settled life with Tam and Jeannie wants to marry a man of her own kind who understands the Egyptian ways.

I tell Jeannie about my peaceful home in Dunure. I take comfort in remembering summers in the boat with Tam, catching fish and playing in the shallows. I tell her, too, how often we braved the rough waters around Doon Head, terrified that the boat might overturn but delighting in the tang of the spray and the danger. My Ma and Pa, Nana and sister Ailsa would join us on the shore to collect kelp, cockles and whelks and we would feast, talk and sing by a driftwood fire. I tell her about Tam trying to kiss me with his pipe still clenched between his teeth, and how we were laughing so hard we could barely stand.

As I talk, I can see my Pa striding towards me with a newborn lamb dangling over his shoulder. I can see myself riding free along the shoreline at Doon Bay, racing with Tam on his grey pony. I can see Ailsa teasing me by waving smoke from the peat fire into my face while Ma combs out my hair and Nana knits stockings in the light from the open cottage door. I am grateful when Jeannie puts her arms around me and lets me weep for the family I have left behind.

This afternoon, we stopped to rest the ponies at a place called Athelstaneford where, Pa says, our Scottish flag first came from. It is a pretty village with a castle and round hills across a flat landscape.

Pa tells us to look at the sky and we may see a white cross of clouds against the blue, just as an ancient king called Athelstane once did (fig. 2.15).<sup>19</sup> We laugh at him, but we all look and I am sad not to see my beloved flag in the heavens.



fig. 2.15



fig. 2.16

We continued our journey a few furlongs more last night, stopping at Linton where we can cross the river Tyne. At my first sight of the pool and waterfall this morning, I know this is a special place with an ancient magic (fig. 2.16).

Jeannie and I take off our boots and woollen stockings, hitch up our petticoats and walk slowly round the swirling edge, feeling the way with our toes. She takes my hand, saying there is a secret place here, a place of crystal, which she loves and wants to share with me. Behind the waterfall, deep inside a cave that glimmers like the clearest night sky, I feel the magic in every part of me.

Holding hands, Jeannie and I say guidbye in our own way. There is no guilt, no Kirk or family to tell us what is right or wrong. We walk together through the waterfall. The icy water on my head and body feels like a christening, a purification, washing away the cares of my past, everything that stops me from living in peace and freedom. A new strength floods

through me, strength that will carry me to Tam. When Ma calls us back to the wagon, Jeannie and I quickly splash our stockings into the water as though washing and scrubbing until the men and boys come to bathe.

Tonight, my ritual is for my Egyptian friends as well as for me and my kin because they are returning to Edinburgh. They had no need after all to take the same road as me.

This separation is full of pain for us all. Taking me aside, the elder of the sons, Johnne, asks me to stay, that he wishes to marry me. I am gentle in telling him that I am pledged to Tam but had it been otherwise I would marry him as he and his family are as dear to me as my own family. Johnne and I hold each other in friendship and in sorrow, and my heart is filled with certainty that I belong only to Tam and must find him soon and tell him my secret.

I have been given so many gifts: plentiful food and a beautiful leather scabbard for my knife, on a leather belt which I can wrap twice around my waist. In return, I give a drawing I made with walnut ink and a dip pen whittled from a stick. It is of all the family with the horses and wagon, drawn on a sheet of good paper I bought from a pedlar. Johnne tells me that if I ever cross into England I must hide my tartan beneath my cloak and speak as little as possible for our countries are still at war. Finally, I make a promise that I will meet my friends again in Edinburgh.

I cannot bear to see them turning the wagon and making their way back along the track we had travelled along only yesterday. Unable to see through my tears, I stumble to the edge of the river and rest there long enough for the river creatures to become used to me.

The dazzling flash of a King's Fisher bird first catches my eye, then the rise of a sleek otter whose eyes briefly meet mine before it dives. Best of all, I see a heron, so still it could be frozen into the river (fig. 2.17). It makes me laugh aloud and startle it into the air.



fig. 2.17

Taking food from my pack I eat as I follow a rough track beside the river until I come to an ancient beehive-shaped doocot very like the one in Dunure.<sup>20</sup> Dozens of pigeons and doves are flying around its sloping top, and I am glad of the warmth of its rough sides where the weak sunlight has been. Rested, I grow restless to walk on, take long draughts of icy water from the river, then shoulder my pack, cover it with my cloak and tartan and set off once more.

That night, well before sundown, weary and footsore, I find a small bothy. I patch the roof in places with branches and moss, and then chew slowly on my cold food so as to have every scrap of goodness from it. I take comfort from my nightly prayers and ritual, holding tight to my sea-carved charm.

I sleep little, waking often. There are quiet voices all around me and I am afraid they are the voices of the dead. Then, I hear Tam's voice as clearly as if he were beside me, but reaching for him is like trying to catch his shadow. He talks for hours, telling me of the places and people he has seen on the march south from Dunure, and of the men's admiration for their commander. I am sad that some of the men had to be left behind, ill or too weak to march. Amongst them was Tam's own Pa, feverish with an infected wound on his leg. I want to tell Tam of my own travels; how I have grown in wisdom and strength walking in his footsteps; and, most of all, my secret, but he does not pause to let me speak.

As the night wears on, Tam warns me that a battle is coming very soon and I imagine how it will be for him. I want to comfort him as he whispers to me about his love for Dunure and for me, how he longs to return to our village, to hold me close as we shelter beneath the walls of the castle.

I awoke as the sun rose, cold and weary from little sleep but full of happiness that Tam is guiding me, keeping me safe from harm. I gather my belongings and food from my pack, eager to take the road again. All day, I feel Tam's presence and long for night and more dreams of him. I am blessed to be able to walk alongside a string of laden pack horses. One takes my pack as an extra small burden for many furlongs until we stop for the night in a stable not far from Dunbar.

My sleep last night was deep and dreamless, empty of Tam. Now, my journey continues with the pack horses. We come upon a small camp of mostly women and children and a few injured Scottish soldiers. I ask there for Tam, but no-one knows of him. I walk quickly on, scared by the men and women who seem half wild and by the sight of bodies lying unburied. For the first time on my journey I feel truly that the land on which I walk is swallowing more and more Scots dead.



My journey is becoming far more dangerous. Parliamentarian soldiers are everywhere. What seems like thousands of camp followers and people fleeing from the fighting struggle through the rain and slush with laden wagons and horses. This morning, my charm led me to find a pike with the head broken off to leave a ragged end to the shaft. I would not want to use it as a weapon - but if needed... Then I thought it would help with my disguise as an old hunchback woman leaning on her staff. Progress is slow, but no-one has challenged me and I overhear snatches of conversation that tell me a little of recent events.

A few days ago, a place called Tantallon on the coast to the north was held captive by a large Parliamentarian army and some of its navy (fig. 2.18).<sup>21</sup> Inside the castle were no more than a hundred Covenanters, I think,

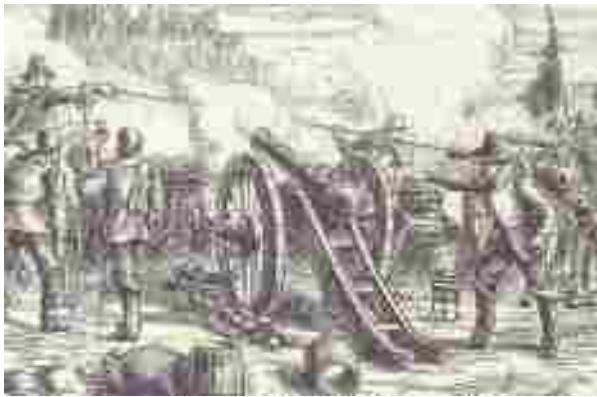


fig. 2.18

delivered them in to our hands'.<sup>22</sup> The slaughter amongst the Scots was without mercy, caused by their leaders moving the army away from the slopes of Doon Hill (fig. 2.19).<sup>23</sup>

At hearing the name of that place, I stop in my tracks, my breath catching in my throat. Hours earlier I had been lost in dreams of Doon Head, and now there is talk of a Doon Hill. Suddenly, over the sound of the wolf wind I can hear a choir, faint and far away, singing our psalm 'the moon by night thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day...' (fig. 2.20).<sup>24</sup>

My body shakes, hot, cold, empty. Stumbling to the side of the track I take shelter behind the biggest tree I can find. My eyes are filled with the blue of sky or water, my nose with a strong, sweet scent. Then, whether my eyes are open or shut, I can see ranks of our soldiers with swords, bows, pikes and muskets, shouting 'The Lord our righteousness',<sup>25</sup> then singing and swaying together ready to dance or to die for this precious Scots soil under their feet. There are no women or children to be seen, and I fear they have already been slaughtered like the Irish before them in Drogheda.<sup>26</sup>

Above the voices of my own kinsmen I hear, over and over, the frightening cry of 'A Cromwell, A Cromwell',<sup>27</sup> as two armies mass for attack. Then, thousands of men's voices sing 'O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord'.<sup>28</sup> English voices, the voices of the conquerors.

but they had held out for almost two weeks before the wrecking of the walls forced their surrender. I fear that Tam might be with them but I get no sign from him that would guide my steps towards Tantallon.

In an icy wind and deepening snow I press on towards Dunbar where I hope someone will tell me they have seen soldiers from Tam's regiment.

Tonight, I overhear Parliamentarian soldiers talking of a battle many of them had fought, in September last year, where the Covenanters had again shown their bravery. They laughed aloud, saying, 'The Lord



fig. 2.19



fig. 2.20

I cannot tell how long I am caught in this terrible vision. As it fades from sight and sound I pull myself to my feet and stagger on along the rutted track to Dunbar. As I come closer to the coast, a dense sea haar comes down and I can barely see ten steps in front of me or see my own breath turning to iced air. It is an evil fog,

full of a stench that makes me shudder. Then once more my eyes see only bluebells, and the sweet scent returns.

Beneath my feet, the torn ground is blood-soaked and again I am in the midst of a vision, this one more terrible than the last (fig. 2.21, fig. 2.22).<sup>29</sup> I see our swaying soldiers cut down like wheat by the flashing swords of the Parliamentarian army. Now they are no longer breathing, singing, shouting men. Now they are corpses writhing in mud. Shattered skulls, severed arms and legs lie amidst a tangle of weapons and dead horses, offerings to the falling rain and ancient petals of poppy flowers. My heart is beating hard against my ribs. It drowns the harsh calls of dark birds haunting the killing ground, circling and fighting over the carcass of its own kind, or a soldier, without discriminating between feather and bonnet.

Terrified, I search for Tam, running across the battlefield, frantic, lifting crushed limbs with my staff and hands. Everywhere the bodies of kinsmen are piled two and three deep, their blue bonnets still visible beneath the mud and the blood. I crawl on my hands and knees, pick at bones like the carrion birds, seek a skull with amber eyes, the right bearing his special mark which I love. Exhausted beyond sense, my belly pressing against the wet earth, I wonder how my life can carry on.



fig. 2.21



fig. 2.22



fig. 2.23

I lie there for a long while as the bitter haar swirls about me. Gradually, the air clears and I catch glimpses of a dark castle. With all my remaining strength, I pick my way through death towards it and find shelter inside its thick walls (fig. 2.23). Now determined to live, I will go on, and on, until I find Tam.

I am much thinner now than at the start of my journey, and know I must force myself to eat and drink until my stomach is full and I find the strength for my ritual. I shall ask for greater strength and courage than ever before, more even than I was granted at the waterfall with Jeannie.

I set out once more at sunrise. A great change has come over me since the terrors of Doon Hill. I pass across the land and through the crowds on the road as though I am unseen, maybe in some borderland between life and death. I can take what I want from the Parliamentarian soldiers' meagre food stores. My body no longer feels the cold. My feet take me without pain over furlong after furlong, through night and day. It is as if I am with Tam, connected by an invisible compass-thread that I must follow, although I can neither see nor hear him.

In my waking dream I walk through dense forests, army camps, tiny hamlets and areas of bleak wilderness. I rest beside steep cliffs, stare across the German Ocean<sup>30</sup> that seems so big I think all the world must be water, and envy the birds that move so freely between sea, land and air. Then, turning inland, I go on through dark forests where no snow or rain falls and where the secretive sounds of birds and animals keep me company as I pick mushrooms and shrivelled nuts the squirrels have overlooked.



fig. 2.24

My pace never varies. I walk to the rhythm of my heartbeat, or the beat of a faraway drum. Great castles, standing tall or ruined by wars, show themselves to me through veils of mist, and I hear the clashes of battles from long ago and voices calling names from old legends: Dunstanburgh, Warkworth, Berwick, Chillingham, Bamburgh, Lindisfarne and Alnwick (fig. 2.24).

I hear, too, voices of the living. Parliamentarian soldiers and their camp followers speak often of what happened after the battle at Dunbar. The slaughter had lasted for just an hour, they say, a small English force defeating a much larger Scottish army. I overhear a soldier praising

Cromwell's mercy in releasing thousands of the Scottish wounded, youngest and most aged.<sup>31</sup> But another soldier argues with him, saying he and his troop had been eating the flesh of dead horses as the local people had no food to spare because the Scots had cleared the land of anything worth eating. Cromwell feared his own men would starve and so had released the prisoners to save the food supplies.

I overhear that many thousands of our strongest Scottish soldiers are still prisoners, for fear they would gather to fight Parliament's men once more. Some have been marched south into England along the same road that I walk now, from Dunbar on to Berwick and onwards still to Durham some thousand furlongs away. I know that Tam is amongst them, feel the pull of the invisible thread that connects us and know my eyes are seeing what his eyes have seen before. Even hearing that many Covenanters have died on the march does not change my belief that he still lives.<sup>32</sup>

The morning is freezing but bright as I walk into a place called Morpeth. One of my companions has joked about a murder path, but I know not why. I find a walled field where I shelter for a while. The earth is churned up as if a runaway horse has dragged a plough across it, and only weeds flourish. I sit with my back against a wall and close my eyes. They are filled again with bluebells and their sweet scent returns, and I know that another vision has come over me. I see proud Scottish soldiers, wasted by cold, sickness and hunger, fighting each other over puddles of rainwater, raw cabbages, leaves and weeds, clawing at the frozen earth for roots (fig. 2.25). I search in vain for Tam. Nor do I recognise any of our brave Dunure soldiers in those wretched men at the edge of life.



fig. 2.25

I live with their torment, see them cry out in agony with the flux as their day passes into night.<sup>33</sup> I see misery mirrored everywhere in the landscape the war is shaping, but I see, too, their will to survive.

As before, the vision fades and I am still sitting beside the wall, cold to my bones. Before I leave the garden I walk across it slowly, inch by inch. Using what I learned from Jeannie I find plants, fern and thistle roots, and mushrooms to add to my store. I turn south, follow nature's compass in search of a living soldier I once called my own.



I did not know - how could I, a simple Scots country girl - that war destroys everything. All around, the land is stripped bare. Everywhere, there are people and animals seeking some safe place. Until this day, my face set towards the next town, I have shunned crowds. Now I look for shelter amongst them. Leaving Morpeth, I meet a friendly family called Frissell, from Berwick, with all they own piled into two handcarts, and their half-starved animals being led with halters by their children. No-one speaks to us as we walk together. All around people are suffering their own misery, caring only that they can place one foot in front of another.

The Parliamentarian soldiers, as hungry as the people fleeing their spoiled lands, are all too willing to part with coin for the weak animals they haul along with them. To the delight of my new companions I add to our meagre food stores with plants and roots from the woods and roadsides.

Arriving at Newcastle, set on a great river named Tyne, we find a town full of suffering from fever and fear everywhere that the plague will return as it has many times before.<sup>34</sup> We are told that people here have no care for the Scots, yet many more townsfolk fear Cromwell and the cruelty that family wars bring. We have been blessed to find shelter in a stable, and to buy hot food from a tavern.

Last night at the tavern I asked about the captured Scottish soldiers and was told they had been brought to the greatest church in the town for a single night (fig. 2.26).<sup>35</sup> The Frissell family promise to wait for me to return, so I have hastened to the church which stands high above the river, close to the castle.

Inside, all is peaceful, only a solitary lady sits with bowed head in a pew close to the altar. I look around, hoping to hear or feel an echo of Tam. The lady comes up to me, smiling shyly, so I find the courage to ask if she knows anything of the prisoners. She says she had helped to clean the church after they had been forced back on the march. They had not been given a scrap of food, and a few had died in the night. I knew that our soldiers would fast before the battle to sharpen their wits and to help them fight even more bravely for victory.<sup>36</sup> By now, many days later, they would be suffering from hunger and the forced marching, not knowing where they would next eat or rest.

Thanking the lady, I sense that Tam is calling me onward. As I make my way down the hill the church bells start to ring and I long for the day when all the bells in all the churches across the land ring out for peace.

I have returned to the stables to find the Frissell family gone. A girl in the tavern tells me that the Parliamentarian soldiers have moved them on. My first thought is to follow them and meet them on the road, but instead I am drawn to the river by the sight and sound of sea birds.

I did not know that a river could be so wide. A long bridge with many wide arches and wooden and stone dwellings crosses it, and many boats and small ships are moored up on the banks or being rowed and sailed

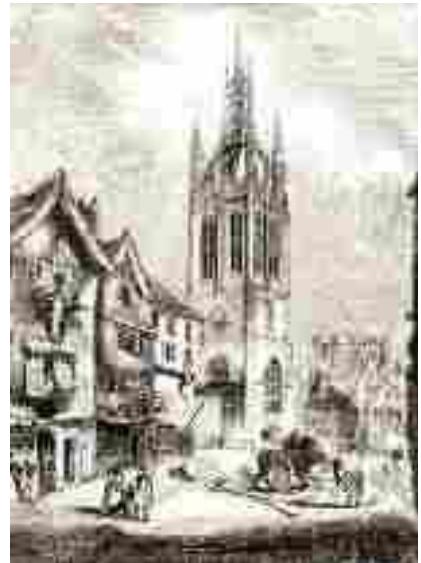


fig. 2.26

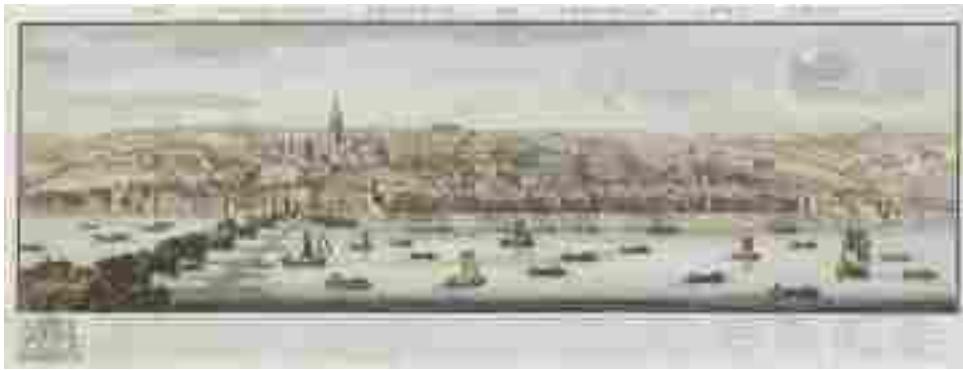


fig. 2.27

along the river (fig. 2.27). Large houses come down almost to the riverside and many fine buildings cover the hillsides beyond, including many churches and the castle. I can see also lots of building work to make new jetties and little wynds leading into the town.<sup>37</sup>

There are many workmen loading coal onto boats, and also many finely-dressed men I think are lords and merchants. I wonder if I can find a boatman to take me down the coast, although I have no sense of where the river runs to or where the German Ocean might take me.

I can hear the boatmen singing as they work, a song in my own Scots tongue.<sup>38</sup>

As aa cam' thro' Sandgate, thro' Sandgate, thro' Sandgate,  
As aa cam' thro' Sandgate' aa heard a lassie sing:  
Weel may the keel row, the keel row, the keel row  
Weel may the keel row that ma laddie's in.  
He wears a blue bonnet, blue bonnet, blue bonnet,  
He wears a blue bonnet, an' a dimple on his chin.

I have stayed too long on the quayside for many of the Parliamentarian soldiers are beginning to gather. I have been sheltering for a few minutes in a deep doorway in one of the wynds, but now I can hear footsteps. With nowhere to hide, I have pulled my hood close around my face in the hope I will go unnoticed. The footsteps have stopped, the boots in front of me of such size no woman could wear. Gathering my courage, I loosen my hood and stare into the bearded face of what can only be one of my kinsmen. As he helps me to my feet, the stranger mutters that we have to find a place of safety. He has led me through a maze of wynds to a small cottage where he has set out bread and cheese and some ale.

Alex, for that is his name, listens to my story. In his turn, he tells me more about our soldiers taken prisoner by the English. Some have been taken from Newcastle to London by ship and from there to another ship, *Unity*, which has sailed for the New World.<sup>39</sup> I try to imagine Tam aboard a ship passing across a vast sea in gales and in calm weather, but no sense of such a voyage comes to me. I take comfort that Tam is still ahead of me on the long road south.

Alex tells me he is part of a small band of Scottish soldiers released at Dunbar under their own oaths to return peaceably to their lowlands and highlands. That they chose instead to fight on against the English and had become an organised unit of Mossers or Moss-troopers, clever at spying and raiding, regarded as outlaws and with a high price on their heads (fig. 2.28).



fig. 2.28

Once darkness fell, Alex set me behind him on a good strong horse and we left the town. I slept now and again against his back, aware at times of the journey through streets and then forest. Now I am fully awake, being gently lifted from the horse in the light of a chill grey dawn. We have arrived at the hideaway.



There are nine men in the outlaw band. They smiled broadly through their beards as they told me the names they chose to use. Two of the men are always away guarding the horses in a cave a furlong away, two others always guarding the hideaway. They could have used me badly, but they are gentlemen all. They call me 'my lady'. Food here is plentiful: mushrooms, roots, and fresh or dried meat from squirrels, pigeons, hedgehogs, deer and young boar. I have heeded their warning not to eat too heartily of the food as it may give me the flux. I did not tell them of my vision in the trampled cabbage field in Morpeth, lest they think me a witch. But I say I had heard that our men had been made sick, and many had died in that place after eating for the first time in days.

I help the men as much as I can, collecting firewood, cooking, and darning clothes, but I cannot stay here for long. Alex and I agree that Tam was likely taken south and that I must follow him, so it is beyond his ken why I would want to find an ancient sacred wall I had heard tales of, built by soldiers. Alex believes I must mean Hadrian's Wall, made by the Romans to keep us Scots in our place.<sup>40</sup>

Last night, five of the men were away on a raiding party, returning weary, sweating and hungry before dawn. Once we had broken our fast this morning, I was given a golden coated pony with a dark stripe down the middle of his back, dark tail, mane, face and legs. I name him Alba after the beloved country we all miss so much. I am used to riding since a child, astride and with just a bridle. Lifted onto the pony by Alex, I cannot but think of my races with Tam on the beach at Doon Bay, and I am eager to set off on my search for him.



fig. 2.29

With my pack filled to the brim, and a lesson from Alex on how to find the Wall, I have taken my leave of the brave Mosser men. I am sorely in need of Tam, but he is not there when I call his name into the forest. After many furlongs, I have made camp amongst the trees beside a stream, with Alba hobbled at my side.

My ritual done, I call out for Tam and think I hear him answer me from far away. Then I hear the bark of a dog fox, and an answering vixen, and know Tam has not yet found me.



fig. 2.30

This morning, my legs pained me so much I could hardly struggle onto Alba's back. After a few hours of travel we have broken from the dark forest into open moorland (fig. 2.29). Riding across it, I can see no other living soul, but I can see the wall easily enough, a dark line in the landscape like an adder in the grass. At intervals there are buildings set into the walls, which Alex had told me were forts to house the Roman soldiers. They gleam almost white in the watery sunlight and then darken as clouds sweep in on the wind (fig. 2.30).

Suddenly, Alba falters and I urge him forward with my legs. For the first time, he does not obey my command and suddenly stands still as if lamed. I slide from his back onto the marshy ground with my blanket and pack.

Winded, I try to stand and am on all fours struggling in my heavy clothes when I see that I am close to a well in the centre of a circle of stones built into the wall.<sup>41</sup> Crawling towards it, I can make out marks on a stone, half worn away by time. In my head I hear my own name spoken aloud: 'Coventina'. Then, 'The Goddess Coventina' (fig. 2.31, fig. 2.32).



fig. 2.31



fig. 2.32

In awe, kneeling, I slowly and gently trace the carvings with my fingers, following the lines made by her stonemason in the ancient days, each limb of her divine body, her rounded belly, her sacred fertility, and the pitcher overflowing with the water of life. With every part of me, I know the stones are inviting me to remember the wisdom of the Goddess.

I do not know how long I stay at the well, but near and far the land is covered in bluebells sending their sweet scent into the air. Of all the flowers in my hameland, Dunure, I love the bluebells the most (fig. 2.33). I understand now that my visions have been sent by the Goddess to guide me to this place.

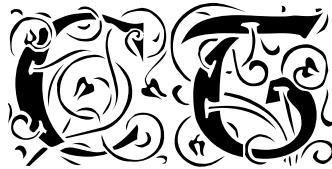
Now the Goddess of the well has loosened her hold on me and her divine blue flowers have faded away. The skies have darkened and the wind is spitting hail. I look around for Alba just as he rears and bolts across the muir towards the distant forest, his eyes wild and shining. I fear he has seen a snake but it is Tam that appears before me, naked, standing some way off beside the wall.



fig. 2.33

Half-tripping on my pack and blanket I gather them up and struggle against the wind to keep my footing. At first I can move only slowly in the deep bog around the well, but I break free of it and keep upright by running my hands across the jagged stones along the top of the wall. I call to Tam for help, but he is always ahead of me. I have to move more and more quickly and lose sight of the battlement wall built to separate people from each other. For a heartbeat or two Tam turns to face me. Our matching eyes meet as they have not met for so many weary months. Then he turns his back on me and disappears.

I am alone, betrayed by Tam.



I had to return to the wall last night, finding a deep ditch in which I could shelter. My thoughts were all confusion after seeing Tam and the discovery that a Goddess had written my name into history. Why had Tam first shown himself to me in that place? Why had he then left me? I felt so alone and wept until I was empty of tears. But then I heard Tam's voice in my heart. Now in the light of dawn I stand once more, filled with the knowledge that my Goddess is with me now, and that my soldier Tam will be my guide to his next stopping place on that death march from Dunbar.

Alba has not returned, so I have set off once more on foot into a cold, bright day enjoying how clear everything looks, both near and far. How light changes everything. I eat my fill from the Mosser men's supplies, and drink deeply of water I drew from the sacred well. It tastes the same as the crushed berry juice Nana makes. As I turned away from the well I thought I heard bells sounding, in high, low, high pitch, but they were muffled and far away.<sup>52</sup>

I follow the line of the wall running east for a short time before turning south, wishing for Tam's presence or his silent call. I look only ahead, keeping my vow to never look back. It is late afternoon, and I have walked far and fast to the rhythm of my marching songs with no sign of Tam. Ahead there is a dense forest stretching as far as my eyes can see like a black wave. It scares me, but there is no way around and I am forced into its dank shade. Moss clings thickly to every tree and little sunlight reaches the ground which is covered with rotting leaves.

I force my way through the tangled trees until a glimmer of starlight is the sign that I must stop, but I fear staying still in this place. I call out for Tam, but my voice sounds weak in my ears and I know he is not there. I have found a hollow tree and set up my small camp in its dry heart (fig. 2.34). It is a night of sleeping and waking. Many times I am startled by the sounds of unseen creatures close by, and I hold tight to my charm and call on the Goddess and Tam for protection.



fig. 2.34

I awoke this morning with such pains in my head I can hardly see. Remembering Jeannie's tablets I unwrap the small bundles she made for me and place a single tablet beneath my tongue as she told me to. I bless her name as the pains lessen and I can start my journey once again.

By afternoon, the dense forest has opened up into many small clearings and I have stopped beside a stream. Weak sunlight through the tree tops is forming many small rainbows above the water and I feel joy once more at being alive. With Jeannie in my thoughts, I bathe my feet and wash my stockings, eat well and then doze. I wake suddenly, sensing that I am not alone. Something or someone is creeping close by and I quickly gather up my belongings and press my back against a tree. I hold my staff firmly in both hands, ready to strike out.

Time is passing and still I cannot see who or what is stalking me. Dusk has fallen and the forest comes alive with the sounds of night creatures. I am weary and afraid. I have called out and prayed, but Tam has still not come to me. Then, low down across the stream, I see a pair of amber eyes. Tam? I ready my staff, unsure, swing it wide and startle a wildcat which springs away.

I truly have no memory of what happened afterwards for many days. I believe that I must have been in a waking dream, my legs carrying me onwards for many furlongs. I returned to myself at the very edge of the forest this morning, hearing Tam's voice calling somewhere ahead, telling me he was in a big church along the road to the south that we had travelled on before. I am desperate to see him, to feel his strength against my body.

I am back on the roadside now, walking fast, no longer afraid of being stopped. Tam's voice is growing louder and stronger, calling to me, and I can see the towers of a distant church against a setting sun (fig. 2.35).

Around me, travellers speak of Durham, Durham, Durham, the name sounding in my ears like a drumbeat.

I can smell decay long before I reach the great church on its steep hill, but it does not stop me. I know that the open portal is an entrance to both life and death (fig. 2.36).

Approaching it, I begin to shake, feeling the carnage my eyes cannot yet see. Slowly, I enter the church and the familiar bluebell scent of the Goddess hangs lightly in the air. I am blinded with frozen tears which cut my cheeks. They fall like spears onto stinking, slippery flagstones. Barely alive, half-clothed, starving men and boys with war-stained hands grab at the hem of my cloak or raise their hands and plead for help. I think I hear Tam's call all around me, echoing through the vast space, but then men's screams drown out his voice. I can bear the sounds and sights of death no longer and flee into the open air.



fig. 2.35



fig. 2.36

I am searching for any sign of Tam, circling the spoiled ground between the great church and a castle. I understand finally about the murder path I heard spoken of at Morpeth. I can feel Tam is close. He touches my skin, making me shiver. Then he is just a silent cry in the castle walls.

At last, I find them, my kinsmen, in an open hole one on top of the other, naked.

Clinging to life after death, each man and boy grasps the body next to his own, as though cradling him from scavenger wolves, never betraying their Covenanters' Oath. They are unblessed, heads lain to the south and their feet to the north (fig. 2.37).<sup>42</sup> A black hoodie crow picks at the soldiers' spines. Another flies suddenly from the cage of a chest spreading sodden muck, its claws clotted with fleshless skin. I fall to the ground as it brushes by me, its wings whipping foul air into my face.



fig. 2.37

I gaze down at broken limbs, empty skulls, hollow eyes. I search for amber eyes, with Tam's special mark. Tam is not there. He is still alive. Or maybe I cannot see him, deep in the pit of bodies? I kneel by the grave. Opening the pouch around my waist I find my precious sprig of heather and place it close to a fingerless hand.

Then Tam speaks to me for the first time:

*It was all over so fast. Thousands slaughtered on the battlefield or mown down without mercy by the Parliamentarian cavalry as we retreated. Our colours were trampled, lost. The English plundered our camp, stripping our dead of weapons and anything of value. We were herded by the cavalry through foul-smelling mud to a track away from the battlefield. Stripped of our weapons and uniforms, barefoot, limbs broken and dragging, many of us despaired. Even then, I knew this could mean a long exile from all we know and love. In ragged lines, we were ordered where to go. They sorted out the badly wounded, old and very young and sent them home.*

*There was no sympathy from the officers marshalling us. We were made to march, column after column of us, always south towards England. I cannot tell you how many of us. Thousands, the heart of our army. Some of us were sent to other places, to labour for the English, without hope of seeing our women and children again. Men who escaped were hunted down by the cavalry and shot (fig. 2.38).<sup>44</sup>*

At Morpeth, and after, many more died of the flux as well as fever. We perished by the trackside, in undergrowth, in muddy pools of rainwater. We were so hungry, Coventina. You cannot imagine our hunger.

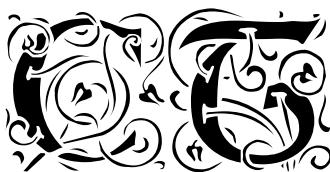
Here, at this great church, yet more men died.<sup>45</sup> Many hundreds of us who will never see the lowlands again, lost in this foreign place. We were given braziers and burned what we could find for warmth. We left our mark on the slabs that will last for centuries.<sup>46</sup>

The English gave us food at last, boiled beef, mutton broth and milk, but it gave many men the flux and they died in agony.<sup>47</sup> Along all the long march and the torment, I thought only of staying alive, of seeing you again. Why are you here, Coventina? You should have waited for me at Dunure, safe with your family.



fig. 2.38

I can barely speak, but I whisper a reply: 'why do you think I am here, Tam?' I should have stayed silent, for Tam left me then.



I cried out for Tam, but he was gone. I remember only that I crawled away from that vile pit further into the churchyard and hid amongst dark bushes and undergrowth that had kept its leaves through the winter.

For a long time I had stopped picking up the pieces of grit that marked the passing days of my journey. I did not know the date or the days of the week, only that the sun had grown a little stronger and the nights less chill. I know that I stayed hidden for three days. That first night, abandoned by Tam, I could not sleep. All night, the screams of the dying echoed around the castle and the great church, and I heard harsh voices shouting and cursing. The soldiers from the great church were still there, all around me, grasping for hope that never came. They withered before my eyes into bones and scraps of skin and hair and I shrank from the horror.

No human beings came close to that cursed, stinking place, but day and night I scared away dogs from the open grave by wielding my staff (fig. 2.39).<sup>48</sup> I had Tam's knife in my hand, too, its blade glinting in the sun and moonlight.



fig. 2.39

On the second night, Tam returned. I saw him standing by the open grave of his comrades, gazing down at their criss-crossed limbs. In my head I heard him saying farewell, swearing allegiance once more to the cause of freedom and to peace.

Then he spoke to me:

*They will return. Not these men, but their descendants, seekers after truth. Not today to this foreign resting place, but in years to come, to honour barefoot soldiers who were buried without respect or ceremony. They will return to honour us.*

I had no chance to move to his side. The ground began to shake and we both fell. We were deafened by the clash of iron on stone, like a hundred blacksmiths all at once hammering horseshoes. It was the sounds of a huge creature, roaring and rattling, burrowing into the ground, then lifting earth into the air and tipping it aside. Then men shouted, waved their arms in the air, and the creature stopped.

In the silence, we all saw that amongst the soil and stones there were bones, many, many bones.

I crawl towards Tam and take his severed hand in mine, look into and beyond the amber light in his eyes, see the burial hole covered now by stone and mortar. I see, too, rooms full of books and strange machines that come to life.<sup>49</sup>

Tam told me, then, what he remembers:

*White coated, masked, men and women collected our bones gently into silken cloths, and put us back together on long shining tables in a shining white room (fig. 2.40, fig 2.41). I am laid out with such gentleness and care, it feels almost like your love Coventina. I am reborn, my face is made young again (fig. 2.42).*<sup>50</sup>



fig. 2.40



fig. 2.41



fig. 2.42

As the third day dawns, I am left as empty as a shell cast by the waves on Dunure beach. I know not how, but I find the strength to move away, to leave the grave and find the road south once more. I say a final prayer to the grave and all the hundreds of fine men who lie in it. Then I turn away from the castle and the great church with its wooden spires that I had glimpsed in the west as I left the forest.

I am drawn to a smaller, roofless, church close by a bridge over a wide river<sup>51</sup> and Tam is beside me reciting familiar words: '*In the presence of my foes... My dwelling place shall be*'.<sup>52</sup>

Bells are ringing out, sounding the same as those I heard at the Goddess's well. As if they are a signal, another vision comes over me. I remember Tam's words 'They will return. Not these men, but their descendants, seekers after truth.' The bells are calling the descendants to this sleeping ground, to bear witness to the Scottish soldiers' rite of passage to their hameland, Alba.

They do not see me in a purple cloak, the Durham colour. Nor do they see Tam in Leslie's tartan drifting in and out of the ranks of soldiers misting the air. The service is simple, the words spoken by a woman (fig. 2.43, fig 2.44).<sup>53</sup>



fig. 2.43

I am crying, for the blessings befit our place in history, make right our long neglect. We shall be remembered.



fig. 2.44

One-by-one the Hamiltons and the Dunbars<sup>54</sup> pay their respects, casting soil into the grave. The casket of my unknown soldier is lowered as a lone piper plays Psalm 121. In the silence, I watch Tam remove his cap and badge, place them by the grave and fade into the bright air of forgiveness. At the place he last stood, I stoop and take a handful of Scottish soil.

As the last mourners pass through the lych-gate I return to the tree where the casket is buried. Beneath its shelter, I set out my tartan and my charm, perform my ritual and lie down to rest. I sleep, wake, keep vigil, and then sleep once more.



It is a cold, dull dawn after my night of rest and vigil beside the grave. Over the last few days I have seen all the evil that was done and then the good that came after. I feel deep sadness and deep happiness, all at once. I sense that Tam is with me still, some way ahead, and that gives me the strength to walk as far as he chooses to guide me.

I have taken once more to the drove roads where there are fewer other travellers than on the great main route. People in the few hamlets I pass are not friendly. If I speak they seem not to understand, although I try to speak like them. Yet they are willing enough to take my coin in exchange for bread and cheese and draughts of milk, and I find streams to fill my water skin. I find it easier now to find wild plants and roots, so my meals have more flavour. I am very thin, but strong like a sapling grown in the wind. Tam's hemp ring is loose on my finger, so I bind it in place with stems of grass.

The way is hard on my feet and I long for Alba to come trotting up to me and carry me over the hard ground and the marshy lands, through the woods and across the muirs. Magic has happened so often before to me on this journey, so why not now? I march once more to my childhood songs, or to a drumbeat sent by Tam.

Today, very far in the distance, I can see the towers of another great church (fig. 2.45).



fig. 2.45

At about noon, I meet a woman picking wild garlic on the edge of a small wood. Outside her tiny hut is a pot over a fire and she gives me a good portion of coney broth to which we add a handful of garlic leaves. It is the most tasty food I have eaten since leaving the Mossers. I try to pay the woman but she waves away my coin. I mime asking where the towers are and she tells me York.<sup>55</sup> She also shakes her head and wags a finger as if to warn me of the place. I take my leave of her, trusting in Tam not to lead me into danger.

But perhaps she is wiser than Tam. York is not a welcoming town.

At the gates there are hanged men swinging in the wind. I take a narrow old street next to a church, regretting my choice for it is gloomy and cold and the cobbles hurt my feet (fig. 2.46). It opens out into a marketplace that looks and stinks like a slaughterhouse.<sup>56</sup> There is dung everywhere, piles of meat on flesh-shelves, and the runnel down the middle of the street is full of stinking offal. Screaming children dash between stalls, trying to steal what they can on the run.



fig. 2.46

My first thought is to back down the wynd but there are fruit stalls that tempt me into the open for a closer look. I have not seen fruit for many months and my mouth waters at memories of raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, crowberries, cowberries, rowanberries, and brambles, crab apples, wild plums and cherries. The nearest stall has a fruit I have never seen before, round and with a deep red skin. On the ground beneath the stall lie some that are crushed and split open. The insides have a white skin and many shining pink seeds. I stoop down to pick one up, but the stall owner kicks it beyond my reach. He holds out a dirty hand as if asking for coin and I shake my head. He smiles, showing stumps of broken brown teeth, and hands me one of the strange fruit. It is time to run. I reach the wynd again, expecting a hue and cry, but none comes.

Nothing I have seen so far has made me like York. I feel trapped in its narrow streets with overhanging rooms and open windows from where rubbish is thrown onto passers-by. After much wandering and by following my nose, I have found the river (fig. 2.47).

It is wide, but muddy-looking, and many barges and boats sail up and down. On the far shore is the great church with towers that I saw far off many days ago, and close by like chicks around a hen are several churches.

Remembering the hanged men at the gate, I have no wish to enter another great church for fear of the horrors I might find inside. But I need rest and food and am blessed to find a small inn with a spare cot. Now I have eaten well, a sweet white fish and some good vegetables. In my room I look closely at my prize, the strange red fruit. I take Tam's knife and try to pierce the skin. It is hard, like a shell. Kneeling, I wedge the fruit on my pack and, with both hands, bring down the blade of the knife. The fruit splits open. I taste the pink seeds and find them bitter, but no worse than the fruits of shame, so I eat them all.



fig. 2.47

I settled to my ritual in comfort and safety. Tam is not with me, but I fall into peaceful sleep.



I am happy to have left York behind me, my pack is full of good food and I am rested. Tam is with me this morning, closer than he has been for days. He does not speak, but I sense he wants me to hurry. York has taken me east of the great road, so now we must find it again. The landscape changes fast in the spring weather, light, then dark, dry then grey with sleet or rain. I do not know how long we will walk like this, Tam and I, but I am content just to be with him.

Tam has led me well, for we are once more on the great road south. Here are the crowds, the cattle drovers, geese herders, market traders, caravans, strawberry fairs, and the post coaches with leather straps holding up wooden seats that make a loud clatter and warn of their approach. We take once more to our desire paths (fig. 2.48),<sup>57</sup> in the forests.

I am no longer afraid of the woods. Life is returning after the bitter winter, and everywhere is fresh with new green growth. Placing my ear against the trunks of trees I can hear the sap rise in them<sup>58</sup> and it fills me with joy. Each forest is more beautiful than the last, the dark leaf mould hidden beneath blankets of white, yellow and blue flowers.

The open places, though, are often bleak. Starlit nights still bring frosts and in the daytime carrion birds circle above. I sing Nana's weaving songs as we march, side by side, keeping time.<sup>59</sup> The sound of Tam's leather boots crunching on stones seeps into me. I hear him whisper, 'we are earth' over and over.

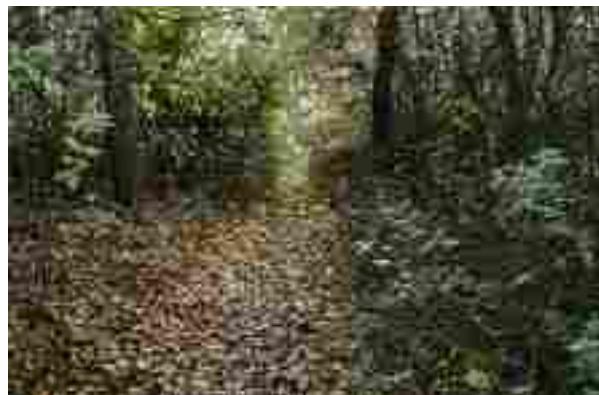


fig. 2.48

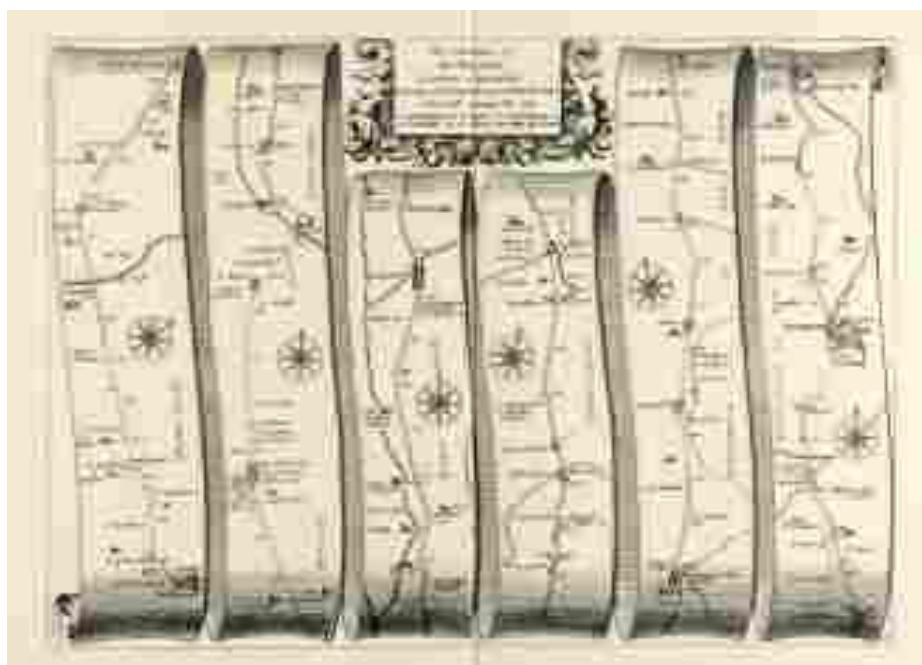


fig. 2.49

I should never have left hame as I did, creeping away in the night without saying guidbye to Ma and Ailsa. But I did not know how long and far I would travel, how many furlongs I would put between us. I remember so many of the paths, the drove roads, the dirty streets of towns, and the crowded road south. My feet have carried me over grass and heather, stones and streams, mud and blood. I have made my own small paths in the forests and trodden between the ruts where the wheels of history have passed (fig. 2.49).

I have spent so much time walking and thinking, trying to understand why I keep searching for Tam when I could have turned back. Now I see that Tam called me so his spirit could tell his story, and that of all the other lost soldiers. He still needs me to find him, dead or alive. Once, I could not have thought this way. How I have grown up. I am no longer ruled by the Kirk and the elders. I have lived some of the fire that Tam has passed through, and now I think of our joined souls, and of hope and freedom.

People walk into view and away again: drovers, soldiers, vagabonds, labourers, children, prisoners. I see the dead, too, but they no longer chill me to my bones. Tam is always here, sometimes beside me, sometimes ahead. He speaks to me only in my dreams, and I have no sense of the boy and man I knew. Have all his beliefs been changed by this family war and his suffering? Will he want only revenge, which will spoil our lives forever? Will he still love me, and welcome the news I have yet to tell him?

Every dawn Tam wakes me and guides me onwards. He is much stronger than me. Our march grows faster, testing me. Once, when I stumble, he takes my hand. I can hardly stay awake for my ritual as dusk turns to dark.

Today, Tam has left me. There is another battle and he is still a soldier of the Covenanters' army (fig. 2.50).<sup>60</sup>

I continue to march, walk, sleep, sing, seek food and water. As the weather warms, I walk barefoot on grass and feel the new life springing in it. Somewhere unknown I sell one of my petticoats for bread, cheese and eggs.



fig. 2.50

Ahead is a large bridge and there is Tam waiting for me. Yet when I reach it as the afternoon shadows lengthen, he has gone. I slide down the bank, find a dry place under the bridge and sleep.



fig. 2.51

This morning, a haar swirls around me as I crawl from under the bridge. I break my fast and a weak sun starts to clear the mist. I shoulder my pack and see Tam standing in the far distance by an old fort across the river<sup>61</sup> but, as I watch, he disappears once more.

I have passed through many landscapes since Dunure, but this place is more water than land and I wonder if I have reached the edge of the German Ocean (fig. 2.51).

The river is coming to life. Men appear rowing strange boats laden with goods, reminding me of coracles made of osier twigs and covered with deer skins.<sup>62</sup> One of the men steers his craft to the bank and speaks to me. I can barely understand his speech, but his gestures show I can step into the boat. Before this journey, I would have been afraid, but now I can tell when there is threat in a stranger's gaze.

I crouch in the boat amongst its cargo of strange baskets, very long and narrow. The boatman steers once more into the river bank and then sets about baiting a basket with worms. He sinks the basket into the river, weighted with stones, and we set off once more until all the baskets have been left in the river.

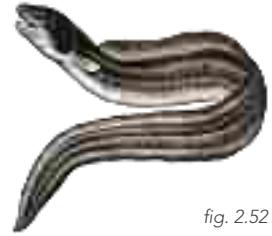


fig. 2.52

Now, we are returning the way we came, stopping at the opposite bank. This time, the boatman pulls up a weighted basket which is heavy with a dark thrashing mass. He rubs his hands in a pot of sand and grit, grasps at the dark mass and, in a second, has a snake-like creature in his grasp. It fights hard, coiling around his arm, but is no match for the man who hits it on the head and throws it into the bottom of the boat. The man grins at me, then says 'eel, eel, eel, good eating', and I nod that I understand (fig. 2.52).<sup>63</sup>

It has been a hard hour or two. The boat is full once more of baskets and of eels and their slime. Now we are resting on the bank in the sunshine, my new friend and I. He has skinned an eel and offered me a piece of its white flesh. It tastes like catfish, muddy. Seeing that I am unsure, he offers me some darker flesh. Smoked eel. It is delicious. As we eat, I search the flat land to the horizon for sight of Tam. He is not showing himself, but I feel the pull of the heart string that joins us.

The boatman and I talk and find we can make out words in the strange sounds we make. I tell him I am searching for my kinsman, who looks and speaks like me and was once a soldier. My hopes are lifted when he tells me I may find him at a place called Earith, and that I must first find a great church at Peterborough.

He tells me of this land, watery, secretive, where folk have lived well on eels, fish and birds for a thousand years. On the dry highlands, they keep horses, sheep and cattle. It is a harsh life, but none starve. As well as the wild creatures, they harvest turf and sedge, reeds, and osiers. He tells, too, of the many hardships nature brings, the clouds of biting midges, the marsh fevers and the ague, the long days of freezing haars and the winds that stab like knives.<sup>64</sup>

He points to buildings that rise tall above the marsh: Crowland Abbey, Thorney Abbey (fig. 2.53), and tells me that the German Ocean is far away.

He warns me that what looks like dry land may be bog that can swallow men and beasts, and that boats are the safest way to travel.

When we part, I have more dried eel to eat, a direction to walk, and the blessing of a good man.

I need all the knowledge I have gleaned along the way, and more, to walk this place. I wish I were a selkie,<sup>65</sup> not a woman, and I miss Tam who has gone on far ahead without me. I struggle for hours, picking my way, until another stranger takes pity on me, a barge man. He has heard men speaking with voices like mine, he says, and he can take me to them as he goes often up and down the West Water.<sup>66</sup>



fig. 2.53

I have nothing to do in this boat but stroke the thick dark coat of the bargeman's dog<sup>67</sup> and watch the river unwind like wool on Nana's spindle. I see many herons, swans, godwits, coots and cormorants and hundreds of other birds of many different types, and cattle and sheep grazing in the water meadows that are starred

with buttercups. I feel at peace and imagine that across this vast, flat land I can see my hameland. We pass over huge lakes that the bargeman calls meres. He tells me they change colour with the seasons and I long to be in a boat with Tam seeing that magic.

As I think of him, he is there, ahead of me, on the water, in the water, slowly sinking (fig. 2.54)... and I dive over the side to be with him. If this is how I am to die, I am content. I will be with Tam. My clothes drag me down, and I let myself sink.

I feel Tam's touch and for a moment in other-time we are amber eyes to amber eyes. Then, I am pushed and pulled to the surface, back into the light, and am breathing air once more. The bargeman's dog is at my side, my cloak held fast in its teeth. The bargeman's frightened face is peering down at me, his arms reaching out, and he heaves me up until I am beside him. He hauls up his dog, takes off my sodden cloak, then finds some rough sacks and covers me, asks me no questions.

My shivering turns to heat. I long for Tam but, somehow, I sleep. I dream of Tam who does not speak to me but only shows me the way I have to go on bog land, rivers and meres, past windmills and churches, castles and abbeys, hamlets and towns.

I see another great church that I think must be at Peterborough (fig. 2.55), remembering the eel man telling me I must find that place before I can reach Earirth. I see myself walking alongside water-filled ditches criss-crossing the landscape.<sup>68</sup>

Sun reflects off the water into my eyes, clouds of foul dust fill my eyes, nose and mouth, and then rain beats into my face. All the while, the wolf wind howls in the reeds.

At dawn, we are still travelling the great waterways.<sup>69</sup> I tell the bargeman how much I regret the trouble yesterday. He waves aside my words, tells me where to find ale, cheese and dried fish which I bring to him as he steers. I know he thinks me strange and will tell other folk of me in the taverns on his route. He keeps his promise to take me to the place he heard the Scots men speak, setting me down by a wall of earth in the landscape, an ancient fort (fig. 2.56). He gives me his blessing, too, and I am grateful for his kindness to a visitor from another country.



fig. 2.54



fig. 2.55



fig. 2.56



I circle the fort, imagining soldiers resting, cleaning weapons and preparing to fight.



fig. 2.57

There is no echo of Tam here, so I walk on. I reach a stone shrine close to a crumbling bridge. Looking out across a landing stage I see a long, straight stretch of water shining in the sun. There are lines of huts and many men labouring on a steep bank and others standing guard over them with muskets (fig. 2.57).<sup>70</sup> Even at a far distance I can hear the men coughing in the damp air.

I want to call out, but no sounds come. I lay down, spread my limbs wide, press my body into black mud, and weep, and weep. I weep for the deep cut in the landscape, for Tam and the other soldiers at Dunbar and Durham, my family in Dunure, and for my country.

Surely, here, I have found Tam?

At last he speaks:

We were held in the rat-infested church for many months. Day after day our dead kinsmen were taken outside and thrown without ceremony into pits beside the castle to continue their journey to their maker. Death was everywhere, we choked on it. Many of us were taken out alive, marched away to servitude. From making shoes to mending nets, the English needed our skills. Some of us were sent to work in the saltpans, or to factories to spin flax or weave linen, or to distant lands to die on foreign soil, others to labour for the English in the draining of the Fens. How our friend Peter Da, struck down at Dunbar, would have raged at the injustices.<sup>71</sup>

Why I survived every torment only to be marched to this waterlogged place, I do not know. The English are sinking in their own wet soil. We dig into it, day after day, standing in water and mud, to drain it. We are changing the very landscape, as if we were God or Nature. The fen folk hate us, threaten to kill us whether free men or not, as our toil will change their ancient way of life for ever.<sup>72</sup> I wish it could be otherwise.

We arrived half-naked, some with feet almost torn to shreds. They gave



fig. 2.58

us boots and stockings, white woollen overalls that never dry and hang heavy on our battered bodies that stink of sweat and mud (fig. 2.58).

Instead of our own blue bonnets we have coloured caps so that we stand out from different labourers from other places, Irish and Dutchmen who are prisoners too.<sup>73</sup> But we were already different. If we try to escape, or falter in our work, we are shot or hanged.<sup>74</sup> If we die, we are not taken to Kirkyards. They bury us in the dry land beside the rivers, or in the banks we have built.<sup>75</sup>

Look at the landscape, Coventina, see the way we are changing it. See us standing shoulder to shoulder, digging out the clay to make the banks.<sup>76</sup> We must work to a rhythm, like our marching feet or our women at their looms. We are building engines, too, to capture the wind and pump out the waters.<sup>77</sup> It is a great work, but it can only be done because we are no longer free men and our labour is cheap.<sup>78</sup>

Now Tam is walking ahead, asking me to follow him along the bank.

*This way, Coventina, this way to the Inn where we rested at last on our way to the dig.*<sup>79</sup>

His voice seems stronger, and closer to me, yet his presence seems more distant each time I see him and I cannot reach him to touch him. I find the Inn, a low building close to the river bank. I buy food there at the back door. English soldiers have taken all the cots so I crawl behind the log pile, wrap myself in Nana's tartan and spend a restful enough night out of the wind.

I have woken to find another haar on the river. Breaking my fast, I doze, still hidden in the shelter of the log pile. In another dream, or another vision I know not, I see a church even more grand than the last, with pointed pinnacles on its tower (fig. 2.59).

I see too a sunlit river busy with barges and lighters, I hear said, carrying goods up north to the sea. I see many small boats on the rivers and ditches, carrying men laying out chains in the water.<sup>80</sup> There are menfolk in handsome dress, fine cloaks and hats with feathers, looking



fig. 2.59

across the river banks to the flat land beyond. They pace the ground, counting their strides.<sup>81</sup> I feel such anger in the air, then, and am startled awake to find the haar cleared. I need to see and hear Tam and crawl from my hiding place, willing him to come to me.

I walk some way along the bank and scramble over a break in its wall. Tam joins me, whispering:

*This old river will never make the land safe from rain and floodwaters. But our drain, the one we Scots are building beside the matching eyes and ears of the Auld Bedford, will keep the people safe.<sup>82</sup> The land under our feet is as ancient as time itself. We belong to that history now, Coventina. Our feet have carried us through wild places and the places of men. In our passing through, we changed them little, if at all. Here, we are changing Nature itself and although we bring good change to some we bring poverty to others.<sup>83</sup> I cannot foresee all that this change will bring, and I cannot stop it. We are searching for rainbows, Coventina.*

There is a settlement ahead, close to the river, with a small church without a spire, looking like a Kirk.<sup>84</sup> Tam speaks again:

*This is the place where the old river and the new river we are digging will be crossed by a big bridge. It will be the strongest bridge ever built along the drains, fine made by Scottish soldiers.*

I ask him when he will be going hame, as I should be there ahead of him, but he disappears and I make my lonely way to the settlement.

I meet a woman who knows fine well my Scots tongue. I ask her where I am and she tells me Mepal, meaning a 'nook of land of a man called MeaPa'.<sup>85</sup> She offers a cot for the night, which I accept with thanks. I learn from her more about the history of these Fenlands, how Tam is right to say the drains paid for by rich men from foreign places are ending an ancient way of life. She tells a poem about the struggles of her people:<sup>86</sup>

*Behold the great designe, which they do now determine,  
Will make our bodyes pine, a prey to Crows and Vermine:  
For they do mean all Fenns to drain and waters overmaster,  
All will be drie, and we must dye, 'cause Essex-Calves want pasture.*

I take her hands because my heart is sore for what is already lost and what more will soon be lost forever.

She gave me a comfortable cot and a fine breakfast of bread and eggs. I have little coin left, but I offered her my spare shift which she took with many smiles. The weather is warming every day and I have no need of the extra clothes.

I walk out into a land with so many birds they darken the sky, and am happy to see so much life and beauty. Without them, this flat land would be yet more bleak.<sup>87</sup> I find Tam looking across the open landscape to where the cut breaks the soil, reshaping the ground into mirrored lines (fig. 2.60, fig. 2.61). He tells me we are close to a fine church that is safe from the ravages of the war. Following his pointing finger, I see the church that appeared in my vision at the Inn. It seems to float on the horizon, like a great ship, making tiny the houses along the river bank that Tam tells me will soon be drowned.



fig. 2.60



fig. 2.61

Rain has come and I have no shelter. It is hard to keep my footing in the mud, even with my staff, and I fear slipping into the river. Maybe that happened to Tam, sunk without trace beneath water and clay. He has left me again. Images come out of nowhere in a swirling haar: a dead horse, my own thin shadow, Tam, a twisted tree (fig. 2.62). When they pass, I can feel my strength draining from me, maybe my life. I am no longer filled with the delight that seeing the birds brought me. How long must I go on chasing Tam in the mud and haars before we can see our lowland hame again?



fig. 2.62

I am helped from the mire by another boatman who sets me down at a ferry crossing. The rain has passed over and I sit in the sunshine hoping to dry my clothes and eat smoked eel. In the distance, men and women perched on wooden stilts wade in the water,<sup>88</sup> and I remember the stilt-walker at the fair in Edinburgh on the day, so long ago, I met Jeannie. I watch barges and lighters readying for a trip to the end of the river, men leading horses, boatmen steering a course with long poles. It brings me joy to watch the barge sails blown into life by the fen wind. A young man stops and asks me if I need a boat. I tell him I need to find the Scottish soldiers and he says to meet him here at sunrise tomorrow.

Tam is with me now. I can sense he is uneasy, but he does not speak. I find a hut beside the river where I can rest. It is wet, and there are snails, frogs and slow-worms for company<sup>89</sup> but I am too weary to care. I take time still over my ritual and am comforted before I sleep.

The young man is waiting for me, a dark cap pulled low on his forehead. His boat is a barge, its sails already filling. I see Tam watching us from the ferry crossing. That memory of us in the boat at Doon Bay so long ago fills my mind. Perhaps it fills Tam's too.

The fen edge river banks are overgrown, so we use our poles to push the barge away into clear water but we are too late on one bend and it almost grounds. The bargeman shouts a warning, then stumbles as the boat swings. His cap falls and long dark hair tumbles onto broad shoulders! He is a she! I have met Nancy the Waterman!<sup>90</sup> Our laughter rings out across the Fens, the land of three-quarters sky.

We rest without sleep for the night close to the tools left for the next day's digging. We laugh and talk and know that we are one and the same, Nancy and I, as we hand down stories from family to family. We shed light on old memories and missing people. Tell how landscapes change through the seasons and how our actions transform this earth and every living thing from meadow flowers to trees, tracks and tributaries.

I can travel no further, or change direction to follow the real river out to the German Ocean. Nancy asks me to stay. She will name her barge for me, *The Coventina*. She paints a rosy picture of life on the waterways. Yet I know what changes are coming and I must find Tam, share our secret locked inside me.

She leads me to the top of the old river where I see labouring

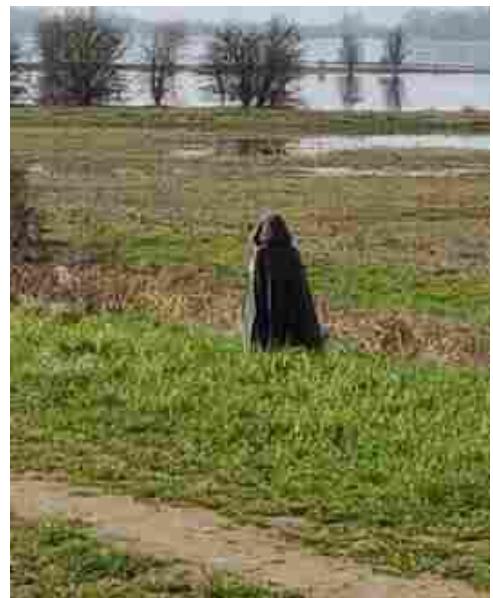


fig. 2.63

men, endlessly plying their trenching tools into the clay and filling their baskets to carve out a new channel to the sea. I leave her my pack, staff and Tam's knife, say I may return soon. I take only my charm and my pouch of treasures.

My quest, walking the corpse road from Doon Bay to Doon Hill, is for others to know. My Nana weaves to a rhythm, the soldiers march to the drum, we all tread to the beating of our hearts. As I walk, my feet now keep time to the poetry of places I have been. Dunure, Dunbar, Durham, Denver. Dunure, Dunbar, Durham, Denver. Dunure...

My place, Earith to Denver, is where I'll stay forever, searching this changing landscape which has taken Tam as its own (fig. 2.63).



fig. 2.64

In my pouch lies my offering to the land. My hand closes around it. In honour of my proud kinsmen, I throw the handful of our sacred Scottish soil, up, out, into the sky. The wolf wind catches it and it scatters across the earth they are digging (fig. 2.64).

Silence.

Then I hear Tam's sigh. It passes from man to man along the line of prisoners-of-war from first spade to last. The sighs turn into our anthem, the song of the undefeated, and I see Tam walk away from me and disappear into the welcoming Fenland landscape (fig. 2.65).



fig. 2.65

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## References

1. Coventina's quest begins in Dunure, a village 5 miles north-west of Maybole in South Ayrshire, Scotland. The Dunure in this story did not exist. It was not a fishing community in the 1650s (its first harbour not being built until 1811), but the castle dates back to the 1200s or possibly further <https://www.maybole.org/community/dunure/dunure.htm>
2. <https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars> & <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Covenanters> & <https://bantarleton.tumblr.com/post/112332003365/a-conventicle-in-scotland-sometime-during-the>
3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1437561/pdf/jrsocmed00251-0064.pdf>
4. Skeleton 22, on which Tam is based, had typical tooth and gum problems for the period, specifically calculus (mineralised plaque); caries; dental enamel hypoplasia (thinned enamel); periodontal disease; abscesses; fractured molar; and enamel chips. Some of these indicate periods of poor diet in childhood, even malnutrition. He would have suffered considerably from dental pain: [https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13\\_Human\\_Bone\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13_Human_Bone_Report.pdf) p. 5. The skeleton shown in the photographs on p. 6 and p. 128 is a 3D printed replica of skeleton 22 created at the Department of Archaeology, Durham University. For dental practices of the period see: *The Making of the Dentiste, c. 1650-1760* - Roger King (1998) <https://tinyurl.com/y4kv9htb>. For the history of needles, see: *Needlework Through History: An Encyclopedia* - Catherine Amoroso Leslie p. 129 <https://tinyurl.com/y4ueo6oj>
5. The last major outbreak of bubonic plague in Scotland took place between 1644 and 1649. Paisley, Dumbarton, Lanark and Glasgow were hit by the plague between 1645 and 1647, and there may have been outbreaks of 'war typhus' in Glasgow and Dumbarton in 1647 and 1648. The outbreak was particularly severe in Paisley, where the sick were removed to the town moor. See p. 10, *The Seventeenth Century* by Dr. John R. Young, part of the series *Essays on the Local History and Archaeology of West Central Scotland*, commissioned for the Regional Framework for Local History and Archaeology (2014) [https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/41313507/Young\\_The\\_seventeenth\\_century.pdf](https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/41313507/Young_The_seventeenth_century.pdf)
6. <http://www.stravaiging.com/history/castle/dunure-castle>
7. <http://bcw-project.org/biography/david-leslie> & <http://www.thepeerage.com/p19364.htm#i193636>
8. The men may or may not have worn uniforms at this late stage in the Civil Wars; many would have been conscripts and dressed in their own clothes. Covenanter soldiers' clothes were typically blue and light grey, and many of the lowland soldiers would have worn distinctive blue bonnets. See *Renaissance Armies, 1480-1650* by George Gush (1982) Part 12 The Scots [http://home.mysoul.com.au/graemekook/Renaissance/12\\_Scots.htm](http://home.mysoul.com.au/graemekook/Renaissance/12_Scots.htm) & <https://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/2ndenglishcivilwar/dunbar.aspx> & <http://sites.scran.ac.uk/weapon/Content/Weapons.html> & <https://steamcommunity.com/groups/pikeshotte/discussions/0/343785574524336651/>
9. Ailsa originates from the Vikings who named a Scottish island in the Firth of Clyde Alfsigeseys (meaning Alfsigr, or Elf Victory). As a result, its meaning evolved to 'supernatural victory'. The island eventually came to be called Ailsa Craig <https://www.scottishgirlsnames.co.uk/ailsa/>
10. <http://www.12eyes.co.uk/caroline/ordwomen>

**11.** At this stage, Coventina is travelling on rights-of-way, where a beaten track, the marks of a sledge, or of an occasional wheeled wagon marked out the road on the hillside, or a narrow causeway or a paved ford left a more permanent record across morass or stream. Drove roads were chiefly used in connection with the local markets <http://oldroadsofscotland.com/post%20mediaeval.htm> & [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-352-1/dissemination/pdf/vol\\_050/50\\_018\\_049.pdf](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-352-1/dissemination/pdf/vol_050/50_018_049.pdf)

**12.** Scottish soldiers James Cuthbert, William Cristen, and James Hume who was sent home - mentioned in Proceedings of the Adventurers, 1651-1652 Vol 5 (R59/31/9/5) and Vol 6 1652-1656 (R59/31/9/6) in the Cambridgeshire Archives

**13.** Travel between towns by public transport, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, was a slow business. The stagecoach, a heavy and cumbersome carriage often without any form of springs, was introduced in Britain in 1640. Up to eight of the more prosperous passengers could be packed inside a stagecoach, while second-class seats were available in a large open basket attached to the back. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=kwq>

**14.** Stephen Tempest, MA Modern History, University of Oxford History of Great Britain: Why did the redcoats wear red? 25<sup>th</sup> Jun, 2013. <https://www.quora.com/History-of-Great-Britain/History-of-Great-Britain-Why-did-the-redcoats-wear-red>

**15.** Fairs and other 'entertainments', including theatre, dancing, and card-playing were unlikely in Presbyterian Scotland, so in that respect this story takes liberties with historical fact. The Westminster Assembly Larger Catechism, Question 139, declares 'lascivious dancing and stage-plays' breaches of the Seventh Commandment. The Scotch Assembly of 1649, 'finding the scandal and abuse that arises through promiscuous dancing, do therefore inhibit and discharge the same, and do refer the censure thereof to the several presbyteries,' etc. Quote from <https://www.covenanter.org/reformed/2016/5/21/the-dancing-question>

**16.** <http://www.scottishgypsies.co.uk/famous.html> & <https://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/STELLA/STARNE/crit/langtrav.htm> & <https://www.s-gabriel.org/names/arval/romany/>

**17.** Gypsies arrived in England at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the tail end of a Romani diaspora that reached Western Europe in the century following the Black Death. They suffered persecution for centuries, beginning with Henry VIII's parliament in 1530 which attempted to banish from England the 'outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians'. Unknown numbers were executed, but many were encouraged to settle rather than lead peripatetic lives. In this story, the Faw family are of Scottish origin, and it is implied that they are settled in Edinburgh. They may have risked arrest by accompanying Coventina as far as Linton. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/historical-journal/article/trouble-with-gypsies-in-early-modern-england/D93181E028BCC1C2E2D8962C6B607552/core-reader> & <https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/oms/romani-gypsies-in-16th-century-britain>

**18.** References to medications and their effects are from Avicenna. Maria Arvide Cambra, Luisa. (2016). Journal of Advances in Humanities 4. 423-430. 10.24297/jah.v4i1.6129 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326975355\\_THE\\_EDITIONS\\_AND\\_THE\\_TRANSLATIONS\\_OF\\_AVICENNA'S\\_CANON\\_OF\\_MEDICINE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326975355_THE_EDITIONS_AND_THE_TRANSLATIONS_OF_AVICENNA'S_CANON_OF_MEDICINE)

**19.** Athelstaneford and the origin of the Saltire <https://scottishflagtrust.com/the-flag-heritage-centre/the-legends-of-the-saltire/> & <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/athelstaneford-p241121>

**20.** <https://www.britainexpress.com/attractions.htm?attraction=1330> & <https://canmore.org.uk/site/203101/dunure-castle-dovecot>

**21.** Battle of Tantallon, 1651 <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/cromwell-in-scotland>

**22.** Seeing the Scots caught between the deep ditch of the Spott Burn and the slopes of the Lammermuirs, Cromwell is said to have exclaimed, possibly referring to Joshua 10:8, 'The Lord hath delivered them into our hands!' Carlyle, T. (1904). Lomas, S. C. (ed.). The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell. 2. London. p. 183

- 23.** Letter from Oliver Cromwell to the Honourable William Lenthall, Speaker of the Parliament of England: Dunbar, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 1650 [http://www.olivercromwell.org/Letters\\_and\\_speeches/letters/Letter\\_133.pdf](http://www.olivercromwell.org/Letters_and_speeches/letters/Letter_133.pdf) / & <http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/media/661.pdf> pp.72-78 & Article by Stuart Reid pp. 16-20 <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/dunbar> & [http://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana\\_Archive/2001.pdf](http://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana_Archive/2001.pdf)
- 24.** Psalm 121, the Covenanter's psalm....the moon by night thee shall not smite, nor yet the sun by day  
Psalms by Alastair G. Hunter p. 21 <https://tinyurl.com/y3z3dsmq>
- 25.** Jeremiah 23.6, 'Lord our Righteousness.' The Scottish Christian Herald, Volume 3 p. 512 poem The Death of the Covenanter by Montague Stanley <https://tinyurl.com/yxjluv2a>
- 26.** <https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Drogheda> & <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/cromwell-in-ireland/index>
- 27.** Reliquiae Baxterianae: Or, Mr. Richard Baxter's Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times (1696) p. 50 <https://tinyurl.com/yyh78xxg>
- 28.** Psalm 117, Laudate Dominum, sung by Parliament's victorious troops after the battle of Dunbar <https://www.heritage-history.com/index.php?c=read&author=ross&book=cromwell&story=scotland>
- 29.** Battle of Dunbar [http://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana\\_Archive/2001.pdf](http://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana_Archive/2001.pdf) Article by Stuart Reid pp. 16-20 & <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/dunbar>
- 30.** The German Ocean is an early name for the North Sea <https://www.etymonline.com/word/north%20sea>
- 31.** The up to 28, mostly incomplete, male skeletons excavated at Palace Green Library, Durham, a UNESCO world heritage site, in 2013 were mostly aged between 13 and 25 years of age when they died: Professor Chris Gerrard <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/11/07/scottish-prisoners-of-war-in-durham-cathedral-an-interview-with-chris-gerrard/>
- 32.** Up to 1,000 Covenanter army prisoners died on the Dunbar to Durham march <https://www.thenational.scot/news/14899327.child-soldiers-remains-found-in-mass-grave-of-troops-captured-at-battle-of-dunbar/> & <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/dunbar>
- 33.** A Letter From Sir Arthur Hesilrige, To the Honorable Committee Of The Council Of State For Irish and Scotish Affairs at White Hall, Concerning the Scots Prisoners October 31, 1650 <https://digital.nls.uk/scotlandspages/timeline/1650.html> <https://digital.nls.uk/scotlandspages/timeline/1650.html>. We now know that the 'flux' and deaths were likely to have been caused by Refeeding Syndrome: article by Laurie Pettitt, October 2016 <https://www.johngraycentre.org/east-lothian-subjects/war-battles-military/dunbar-1650/cromwells-prisoners/> & <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/battle-of-dunbar-prisoners-died-of-refeeding-not-starvation-1-4199287>.
- 34.** In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Newcastle -upon-Tyne suffered from the plague in 1609, 1625, 1636 and 1665. How plague wiped out nearly half the population of 17<sup>th</sup> century Newcastle by David Morton, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/history/how-plague-wiped-out-nearly-12121647> & Where are Newcastle's plague pits - and which nightclub was 'haunted by plague ghosts'? by David Morton, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/newcastles-plague-pits-nightclub-haunted-12163645>
- 35.** op. cit. A Letter From Sir Arthur Hesilrige
- 36.** After the Battle article by Daniel Weiss in Archaeology (A publication of the Archaeological Institute of America) May/June 2017 pp.1-3 <https://www.archaeology.org/issues/255-1705/features/5465-scotland-dunbar-battle>
- 37.** In Newcastle, these narrow streets or alleyways are known as 'chares'; 'wynds' is how they are known in Scotland. The

*City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne of to-day by William Weaver Tomlinson (W. Scott, London 1891), p. 44. This is an interesting antiquarian book on the history and architecture of Newcastle, with superb engravings <http://access.bl.uk/item/pdf/lсидyv35dd6a4a>*

**38.** The workers were the keelmen of Tyneside who worked on the large boats called keels that carried the coal from the banks of the rivers Tyne and Wear to the waiting collier ships moored out in deeper water <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/keelmen-of-tyneside/E23C8248A7E753316DCB08E05FBDC7E0>. Song from <http://mysongbook.de/msb/songs/w/weelmayt.html>

**39.** Prior to sailing, the captive soldiers destined for Virginia were kept in dire conditions in Blackwall, or on Thames hulks. The Unity departed Gravesend on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1650 Cromwell's Masterstroke: Dunbar 1650 by Peter Reese (2006) Ch. 9, Capture and Exploitation & <https://scottishprisonersofwar.com/2014/02/15/unity-list-updated/> & <http://www.douglashistory.co.uk/history/articles/unity.html#.XOw6RBZKgkI> & [http://www.oldberwick.org/oldberwick/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=262:following-the-trail-of-the-1650-scottish-prisoners&catid=53&Itemid=72](http://www.oldberwick.org/oldberwick/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=262:following-the-trail-of-the-1650-scottish-prisoners&catid=53&Itemid=72)

**40.** Hadrian's Wall would probably have been known as the Roman Wall or Picts' Wall when this story is set. <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/hadrians-wall/> & <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/hadrians-wall/hadrians-wall-history-and-stories/history/> & free online course by Newcastle University: Hadrian's Wall: Life on the Roman Frontier <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/hadrians-wall>

**41.** The Coventina at the shrine was a Romano-British goddess of freshwater <https://ericwedwards.wordpress.com/2014/04/11/the-goddess-coventina-of-northumbria/> & [https://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=1013364&sort=4&search=all&criteria=coventina&rational=q&recordsperpage=10](https://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1013364&sort=4&search=all&criteria=coventina&rational=q&recordsperpage=10)

**42.** Bronze bell(s) found at Coventina's well in 1876. An account of the Roman Antiquities preserved in the Museum at Chesters, Northumberland - John Clayton, 1903, p. 69 [tiny.cc/5g2c7y](http://tiny.cc/5g2c7y)

**43.** Graves, C. P. (2018) 'Curst Dunbar and Durham', in Lost Lives, New Voices: Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers at the Battle of Dunbar 1650. Oxford: Oxbow Books (2018) by Christopher Gerrard, Pam Graves, Andrew Millard, Richard Annis, and Anwen Caffell p. 28. When excavation began it was obvious that the human remains were not laid in accordance with the usual careful burial practices of the medieval or post-medieval period, where individuals were typically buried in an extended supine position with their heads to the west and feet to the east. In their burial position, the skeletons were mostly aligned south-north with heads to the south. Tam, skeleton 22, was buried probably supine, S-N. See also [https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13\\_Human\\_Bone\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13_Human_Bone_Report.pdf) p. 54.

**44.** op. cit. A Letter From Sir Arthur Hesilrige & Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis (2003) p. 6, pp. 8-9 <https://www.heritagesouthholland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/AOS-D-0167-Prisoners-of-the-Fen.pdf>. Please note the address on the book's frontispiece is no longer that of Mr. Bevis. Mr. Bevis has written and published 126 books in the past 65 years, the majority chronicling the history of Fenland and illustrated by his line-drawings and photographs. <https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/fenland-historian-who-has-written-126-titles-over-the-past-65-years-says-he-has-published-his-last-book-1-2319501> A letter from him to The Word Garden is reproduced on p. 133 of this publication following The Order of Service.

**45.** [& 'It was in no-one's interests to keep so many men locked up for a lengthy period and that was never the intention. The situation inside the cathedral slipped out of control. Once the 'flux' took hold, dysentery as we would call it, disease spread quickly. The cramped spaces, of course, did little to help. Vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhea are just some of the symptoms and although Haselrigge brought in physicians and nurses and moved the sickest to the castle, 1,600 were dead within six weeks. That is a rate of about 30 men a day' - Professor Chris Gerrard: https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/11/07/scottish-prisoners-of-war-in-durham-cathedral-an-interview-with-chris-gerrard/](https://www.scotclans.com/scotland/scottish-history/scottish-unification/1650-dunbar/the-death-march-to/durham)

**46.** 'There is at least one visible scorch mark in the south aisle of the cathedral that may have been caused by the fire of a brazier whilst the prisoners were there' (Norman Emery, pers.comm.) p. 8 of Palace Green Library excavations 2013 (PGL13) The Dunbar Diaspora: Background to the Battle of Dunbar, and the Aftermath of the Battle, Pam Graves October 2016 <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/20941/1/20941.pdf>

**47.** op. cit. A Letter From Sir Arthur Hesilrige.

**48.** Two of the excavated skeletons had animal gnawing marks. This suggests that the bodies could have been left exposed prior to burial, or that the mass burial pit was kept open and gradually filled [https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13\\_Human\\_Bone\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/archaeology/pdfs/PGL13_Human_Bone_Report.pdf) p. 50

**49.** Palace Green Library excavations 2013 (PGL13) The Dunbar Diaspora: Background to the Battle of Dunbar, and the Aftermath of the Battle, Pam Graves October 2016 <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/20941/1/20941.pdf>

**50.** A video of the facial reconstruction is available here: [https://youtu.be/JXOL\\_kw9sB8](https://youtu.be/JXOL_kw9sB8). Three further YouTube videos show aspects of the excavation and meticulous examination of the skeletal remains: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wq5o4FLmg4M> / <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lN0HBPHzpUo> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j89Eo9k874>.

**51.** The Re-interment of the Remains of Scottish Soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar, 1650, at Elvet Hill Road Cemetery, Durham <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/15-june/news/uk/17th-century-scottish-prisoners-of-war-reburied-near-durham-cathedral>. There was considerable consultation undertaken to determine the most appropriate burial site for the soldiers: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/europe/pg-skeletons/reburial/>. The full reburial service can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/xD0K7G7wO4Q>. The headstone, carved by hand using local stone and designed in the tradition of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has now been installed: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/europe/pg-skeletons/news/>. It reads: 'Here lie the remains of those Scottish soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar who died in Durham 1650-1651, were excavated from Palace Green Library in 2013, and were reburied here on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018.'

**52.** Crimond, Scottish Psalter 1650, based on Psalm 23 The Lord is my Shepherd.

**53.** The full Order of Service is reproduced in the Appendices pp. 130-131. This historically important document will be regarded as a valuable primary source by future researchers.

**54.** Names representative of the many descendants of the Dunbar soldiers [https://scottishprisonersofwar.com/battle\\_of\\_dunbar\\_pows\\_america/](https://scottishprisonersofwar.com/battle_of_dunbar_pows_america/)

**55.** The Scottish soldiers were not taken to York after the battle at Dunbar (unlike Scottish prisoners from the battle of Worcester), so Coventina is no longer following in their tracks at this point in the story. Tam is ahead of her, but proving an unreliable guide.

**56.** York's Shambles were once known as The Great Flesh Shambles, probably from the Anglo-Saxon Fleshammels (literally 'flesh-shelves'), the shelves that butchers used to display their meat. <https://www.insideyork.co.uk/index.php?q=what-to-see/shambles/>

**57.** Desire paths have been described by Robert Macfarlane as 'paths & tracks made over time by the wishes and feet of walkers, especially those paths that run contrary to design or planning' <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/oct/05/desire-paths-the-illicit-trails-that-defy-the-urban-planners>

**58.** You can hear the sap rising article by Mark Cocker, Tree Life 2019 Supplement sponsored by Yorkshire Tea, The Guardian Labs April 2019 pp. 20-21 <https://www.theguardian.com/yorkshire-tea-amazing-trees/2019/apr/04/the-joy-of-springtime-in-the-woods-you-can-hear-the-sap-rising>

- 59.** Hebridean weaving songs were used to provide rhythm to the long process of 'waulking' the tweed to soften it e.g. <https://youtu.be/ekO8W0zSZ08> & many other examples: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=waulking](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=waulking)
- 60.** <http://bcw-project.org/military/third-civil-war/worcester>
- 61.** Water Newton <https://peterborougharchaeology.org/peterborough-archaeological-sites/durobrivae/> & <https://www.waternewtonvillage.co.uk/water-newton-village-history/>
- 62.** The Fenland Past and Present, Samuel H. Miller, London (1878) p. 32.
- 63.** The Fine Art of Trapping Eels [http://www.fishingmuseum.org.uk/eel\\_bucks.html](http://www.fishingmuseum.org.uk/eel_bucks.html) & Video: Anglia Television presenter Cyril Wilkinson visits eel catcher Johnny Barnes, and is shown the skill of eel catching from the River Delph on the Cambridgeshire Fens, 1961 <http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/216910>
- 64.** Fen Sketches: Being a Description of the Alluvial District Known As the Great Level of the Fens, with a Brief History of Its Progressive Improvements in Draining and Agriculture (1852) by John Algernon Clarke [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=GDkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=GDkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) & op. cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis (2003) p.4, p. 6.
- 65.** In Scottish mythology, selkies are 'seal folk', mythological beings that can transform from seal to human by shedding their skin. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/legends-selkies-hidden-germs-sea-mythology-006409>
- 66.** West Water - History of the Drainage of the Great Level of the Fens Called Bedford Level, Volume 2 Samuel A. Wells 1830 p. 51 [https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=aplJAAAAIAAJ&hl=en\\_GB&pg=GBS.PR12](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=aplJAAAAIAAJ&hl=en_GB&pg=GBS.PR12)
- 67.** <https://www.dogsbybreed.com/category/origins/1600s/>
- 68.** <http://ousewashes.org.uk/>
- 69.** Whittlesea Mere <http://www.greatfen.org.uk/heritage/whittlesea-mere> & <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hunts/vol3/pp249-290#fnn16> 'At the end of the Chron. Petrob. ed. by Thomas Stapleton and published by the Camden Society in 1859 (Old Series no. 47, Appendix, pp. 182–3) is printed the first part of the Liber Niger Monasterii S. Petri de Burgo, which contains a list of the manors and other possessions of the abbey, and which concludes with an account of Whittlesea Mere, here translated from the Latin. The description is not dated, but from the appended list of prelates who were present, it must have been written between 1020 and 1023'.
- 70.** op. cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis p. 6
- 71.** A Peter Da was killed at Dunbar: National Records of Scotland (NRS), CH2/65/1 Ceres Kirk Session Minutes 1644-1686.
- 72.** The centuries-long history of fen drainage is a fraught and fascinating one: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hunts/vol3/pp249-290>
- 73.** Portland Bill engagement. op.cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis p. 3 & <http://bcw-project.org/military/first-anthro-dutch-war/portland>
- 74.** In this story, Coventina and Tam arrive prior to the actual arrival of the Durham prisoners. 'In October 1651, following the Battle of Worcester, the Council of State directed that some prisoners from that battle should be sent to work for the Adventurers draining the Fens (Emery, n.d., 10). On 14<sup>th</sup> October they also offered the Adventurers some of the Durham prisoners (Cal. S.P. Dom. 1651, 475) but they were apparently not sent before January 1652 when reference is made to 500 Scottish prisoners at Durham being sent to Kings Lynn. It seems that the prisoners in the Fens were released in

1652 or 1653 and replaced by Dutch prisoners of war (Emery n.d., 10).<sup>7</sup> Palace Green Library excavations 2013 (PGL13) The Dunbar Diaspora: Background to the Battle of Dunbar, and the Aftermath of the Battle, Pam Graves October 2016 <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/20941/1/20941.pdf> p.10 & op. cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis p.10.

**75.** The soldiers toiled in appalling conditions, standing for hours in water and mud. In winter bronchial disorders, particularly pneumonia, were common. It is probable that some of them succumbed in warm weather to 'Marsh Fever' (malaria), endemic in the Fens for centuries. Recorded outbreaks from around 1500 had a 7% mortality rate: The Fen Plagues - by Dr. Tim Wreghitt OBE <http://www.sawstonhistory.org.uk/jan-2009-meeting-report.htm> & op.cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis p. 4 & p. 6. See also the P.S. on the letter from Trevor Bevis, reproduced after the Order of Service; he imagines driving over the bones of the drainage workers who perished on the Fens.

**76.** The soldiers were given a range of tools: dyke and drain cutting spades, trenching gouges, turving spades, paring spades, and plain trenching ploughs - illustrated on p.10 of op.cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis.

**77.** The draining of the Fens caused severe engineering problems that necessitated the installation of pumps to move water from dikes to drains, and from drains to rivers. In fact, the introduction of pumping engines was the critical factor that saved most of the Fens from re-inundation. Some such engine may have been in use before 1600 and, at any rate during the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were notices of patents for engines 'for raising water and draining surrounded grounds.' Footnotes 166 & 167 in <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hunts/vol3/pp249-290#fnn167>

**78.** Freedom and what it means in religious, social and legal terms is a major theme in this story. During her journey, Coventina is freed gradually from the constraints of family, clan and Kirk, commencing with her time with the gypsy girl Jeannie in Edinburgh. Tam refers twice to not being a free man, and the soldiers were undeniably kept as prisoners while on the Fens, under threat of death should they attempt to escape. There is clear evidence of some soldiers from the battles of Dunbar and Worcester becoming indentured labourers and servants, both in England and in America (op. cit. The Dunbar Diaspora: Background to the Battle of Dunbar, and the Aftermath of the Battle, Pam Graves October 2016 <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/20941/1/20941.pdf> pp. 9-10). We know that the Scottish soldiers on the Fens were not indentured as they had no written contracts determining a defined period before their release. They were paid for their labours (so to describe them as enslaved is inaccurate). However, their daily pay was pitiful: between 2d and 4d. This contrasts with daily payments to local labourers of between 10d and 16d. Source: Dr. Peter Daldorph, consultant environmentalist & writer/director of The Scottish Soldier play created for this project.

**79.** The Anchor Inn at Sutton Gault on the bank of the New Bedford River. Built in 1650 to serve the men digging the drains, particularly the Scottish prisoners of war <http://anchor-inn-restaurant.co.uk/>

**80.** Chains were used to measure the width of drains and rivers. Op. cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis p. 11 <https://www.heritagesouthholland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/AOS-D-0167-Prisoners-of-the-Fen.pdf>

**81.** The Company of Adventurers <http://wwwousewashes.info/drainage-authorities/adventurers-and-blc.htm> which employed the Dutch engineer Cornelius Vermuyden (1595-1677) to direct the Fen drainage. During the Civil War, in 1642, Parliament ordered the dikes broken and the land flooded to stop a Royalist army advance. In 1649 Vermuyden was commissioned to reclaim the Bedford Level; 40,000 acres were drained by 1652 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cornelius-Vermuyden>

**82.** The first fen drainage undertaken by The Adventurers [1630-1636] included a new channel for the waters of the River Ouse, running in a straight line from Earith to Salter's Lode, seventy feet wide and twenty-one miles long (later known as the Old Bedford River) <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hunts/vol3/pp249-290#fnn141>. The Scottish prisoners were cutting the New Bedford River, running slightly east and parallel to the Old Bedford River; this new cut became known generally as the Hundred Foot River and is the main channel of the Ouse. Between the two rivers lies the Ouse Washes <http://ousewashes.org.uk/>

**83.** Wicken Fen, on the eastern edge of the Fens, with its waterlogged surface rising several feet above the adjoining

peatlands, gives some indication of what the whole Fen region was like before Vermuyden's day <https://www.britannica.com/place/Fens>. As a result of the drainage, the vast flood plain of the Fens were gradually transformed into fertile lands. The flat tops of the high embankments were used as dry causeways linking communities and enabling the movement of livestock. In 1652, Cornelius Vermuyden reported that the Bedford Level and the North and Middle Levels were so improved that there were 'about 40,000 acres then sown with coleseed [rapeseed], wheat and other winter grain, besides innumerable quantities of sheep, cattle, and other stock, where never had been any before.' op. cit. Fen sketches by John Algernon Clarke pp. 104-5. Eventually, the prisoners were employed to lay minor road across fields. New rivers provided additional means of transport, and some towns became minor ports with fleets of barges and lighters. The prosperous Fens we see today are a direct result of the superb drainage system on which the Scottish, Dutch and Irish prisoners of war worked in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Shamefully, there is no memorial to these men on the Fens, except the unique landscape they helped create op. cit. Prisoners of the Fens - Trevor Bevis pp. 12-13.

**84.** Mepal Church <http://www.druidic.org/camchurch/churches/mepal.htm> & <http://www.mepalparish.org.uk/about-mepal.html>

**85.** <http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Cambridgeshire/Mepal>

**86.** In his monumental 1662 history of the drainage of the Fens, the antiquarian William Dugdale reports that outraged locals composed 'libellous songs' to protest the theft of their commons. Preserving a rare specimen of this genre, Dugdale printed an anonymous ballad entitled 'The Powtes Complaint'. <https://pure.hud.ac.uk/en/publications/angling-for-the-powte-a-jacobean-environmental-protest-poem> Dr. Todd A. Borlik and Clare Egan p. 284. The 'obstreperous behaviour of Fenmen' was not limited to the penning of protest ballads. Rioting, 'tumultuous assembly', and destruction of crops and property, including sluices, dykes and drains, were also resorted to by those who suffered the social injustice of having their commons appropriated and livelihoods destroyed: op. cit. Fen sketches by John Algernon Clarke pp. 107-116.

**87.** Welches Dam on the Middle Level, named after Edmund Welche, one of the Company of Adventurer's engineers, was built to turn the Forty Foot Drain into the lower course of the Old Bedford River <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol4/p164>

**88.** op. cit. Fen sketches by John Algernon Clarke p. 69 [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=GDkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=GDkDAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

**89.** Snails, frogs and slow-worms were in Miss Celia Fiennes' Inn bedroom in Ely in 1698 The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes edited by Christopher Morris (Webb & Bower, 1984) p. 141.

**90.** More Tales from the Fens, W. H. Barrett, edited by Enid Porter (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 25-29.

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**Fig. 2.21, Fig. 2.22** Two photo-montages © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery and incorporating copyright images of skeletons from Durham excavations supplied by North News & Pictures [www.northnews.co.uk](http://www.northnews.co.uk) with the permission of Durham University

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**Fig. 2.24** Photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery of many of these castles

**Fig. 2.25** Photo-montage © Barbara Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery including:

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**Fig. 2.27** Engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (1696-1779) The South-East Prospect of Newcastle upon Tyne published 15<sup>th</sup> April 1745. The Guildhall, Castle, St Nicholas' church and old Tyne Bridge can all be seen. Licence purchased from the Government Art Collection, Agreement No 2650: GAC 7150 <https://www.gac.culture.gov.uk/gacdb/search.php?mode=show&id=16061>

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**Fig. 2.31, Fig. 2.32** Two carvings of Coventina and (in the second image) her nymphs reproduced with permission from Berwickshire Naturalists, via Archive.org <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=a312&file=index&do=showpic&pid=93274> & <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=a312&file=index&do=showpic&pid=93>

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**Fig. 2.36** Photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery. Includes engraving of Durham Cathedral West door from Handbook to the Cathedrals of England, Vol. 6 by Richard John King, 1818-1879 <https://archive.org/details/handbooktocathed06kinguoft/page/242>

**Fig. 2.37** © John Lyons

**Fig. 2.38** Photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery. An excellent summary of the battle is provided by Historic Environment Scotland, the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/BTL7>

**Fig. 2.39** Two photographs of skeletal remains from the excavation courtesy of Durham University (permission via Angela Gemmill) and © North News & Pictures [www.northnews.co.uk](http://www.northnews.co.uk)

**Fig. 2.40** Mr. Richard Annis, Senior Archaeologist in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University - courtesy of Durham University (permission via Angela Gemmill) and © North News & Pictures [www.northnews.co.uk](http://www.northnews.co.uk)

**Fig. 2.41** Dr. Anwen Caffell, Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Archaeology, Durham University, with one of the Dunbar skeletons - courtesy of Durham University (permission via Angela Gemmill) and © North News & Pictures [www.northnews.co.uk](http://www.northnews.co.uk)

**Fig. 2.42** Liverpool John Moores University's Face Lab, 3D facial depiction of SK22 © Face Lab

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/news/articles/2017/12/14/17-century-scottish-solider> & "Perhaps the lasting impact of the Dunbar story is to allow these unidentified men a chance to tell their own story through their

remains. We do not know their names, of course, we never will, but we have shown that the past is very much alive in the present and we hope that their stories, however humble, are not forgotten again" Professor Chris Gerrard <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/11/07/scottish-prisoners-of-war-in-durham-cathedral-an-interview-with-chris-gerrard/>

**Fig. 2.43** Photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using extracts from the Order of Service and photographs supplied by North News & Pictures

**Fig. 2.44** Re-interment <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/15-june/news/uk/17th-century-scottish-prisoners-of-war-reburied-near-durham-cathedral> © North News & Pictures [www.northnews.co.uk](http://www.northnews.co.uk)

**Fig. 2.45** City of York from S.S.E, drawn by Francis Place 1676. © Trustees of the British Museum. Supplied by [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?searchText=CITY%20OF%20YORK%20F.%20Place&LINKID=34484,|assetId=447157001&objectId=751051&partId=1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?searchText=CITY%20OF%20YORK%20F.%20Place&LINKID=34484,|assetId=447157001&objectId=751051&partId=1) under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license.

**Fig. 2.46** From York, described by George Benson, illustrated by E. W. Haslehust (Blackie & Son Ltd, London, 1911) p. 21 [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/49440/49440-h/49440-h.htm#THE\\_SHAMBLES](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/49440/49440-h/49440-h.htm#THE_SHAMBLES)

**Fig. 2.47** [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/Engraving\\_of\\_Old\\_Ouse\\_Bridge.jpeg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/Engraving_of_Old_Ouse_Bridge.jpeg).

**Fig. 2.48** © Helena g Anderson 2019 <http://www.helena-g-anderson.com/>

**Fig. 2.49** Map Plate 6 London to Barwick showing Stilton, Stamford, Grantham, Newark, and Tuxford from John Ogilby's Britannia atlas (1675) <https://www.fulltable.com/vts/m/map/ogilby/a/SH944.jpg> & for the full collection of plates: <https://www.fulltable.com/vts/m/map/ogilby/mna.htm>

**Fig. 2.50** Battle of Worcester, published 1810 by Machell Stace. [CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>)] [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6f/Battle\\_of\\_Worcester.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6f/Battle_of_Worcester.jpg)

**Fig. 2.51** © Helena g Anderson 2019 <http://www.helena-g-anderson.com/> Map of the Great Level of the Fens, Bedford Level by Samuel Wells, Registrar of the Bedford Level Corporation (printed 1829), loaned to The Word Garden by Ian Charlesworth on behalf of the owner John Clarke The white line following exactly the path of the Old Bedford River is a ray of sunlight through a semi-closed curtain as the map was being photographed.

**Fig. 2.52** Copyright-free vintage eel supplied by Barbara J. Grafton.

**Fig. 2.53** Photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using public domain imagery of Crowland Abbey and Thorney Abbey, and photograph of the Ouse Washes in flood, looking south from Sutton Gault © Simon Stirrup, February 2007 <http://www.simonstirrup.co.uk/catalogue/landscapes/ousewashes.htm> (requires Flash Player to view).

**Fig. 2.54** © Jean Rees-Lyons 2019.

**Fig. 2.55** Mid-19th century steel vignette "Peterborough Cathedral & West View of the City" engraved by Rock & Co., supplied by Barbara J. Grafton.

**Fig. 2.56** Earith Bulwark, built in 1643 by Parliamentary forces to protect the bridge where the Huntingdon to Ely road crosses the river <https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/e0/0f/e8/e00fe8c17509ed30f277c741f20d792a.jpg> & <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013282>

**Fig. 2.57** Men digging - Littleport Society Records.

**Fig. 2.58** © Helena g Anderson 2019 <http://www.helena-g-anderson.com/>

**Fig. 2.59** Ely Cathedral. <https://archive.org/details/nouveaudictionn02trou/page/562> Nouveau dictionnaire encyclopédique universel illustré: répertoire des connaissances humaines 1885 Vol. 2, p. 563 by Jules Trouset.

**Fig. 2.60** Photo of Tam © Jean Rees-Lyons 2019.

**Fig. 2.61** Number 10 Jonas Moore's Mapp of the Great Level of the Fenns 1658 Facsimile and digital images including 1684 and 1706 edition, accompanying text by Frances Willmoth and Elizabeth Stazicker.

**Fig. 2.62** photo-montage © Barbara J. Grafton 2019 using copyright images: Horse © Helena g Anderson 2019 <http://www.helena-g-anderson.com/> & Tree © Andrew J. Rees 2019 & Coventina © Jean Rees-Lyons.

**Fig. 2.63** © Jean Rees-Lyons 2019

**Fig. 2.64** © Helena g Anderson 2019 <http://www.helena-g-anderson.com/>

**Fig. 2.65** © Adam Giles, Cambridge FilmWorks Ltd, 2019

## **Further Reading List**

- Britain, *The Journals of a Tourist in the 1790's* edited by Ian Ousby (Thistle Publishing, London, 1992)
- Contrasting Communities, *English Villages in the Sixteen and Seventeenth Centuries* by Margaret Spufford (Cambridge University Press, 1974)
- Covenanter Martyrs and Transportees: An Annotated Index of People, Places and Events in Scotland and America by Mary Lou McHaffie Ramsey (McHaffie-Ramsey Books; 2006 edition; in Kindle format 2009). Volume 1, A-E; Volume 2, F-L; Volume 3, M; Volume 4, N-Z
- Creative Drama in Groupwork by Sue Jennings (Winslow Press Ltd, Oxon, 1986)
- English Social History by G M Trevelyan (Book Club Associates, Longman Group Ltd, 1973)
- Fenland, A Landscape made by Man by Peter Hewitt (Wisbech Society and Preservation Trust, 2014)
- Fenland Chronicle by Sybil Marshall (Penguin Books, 1998)
- Fenwomen A portrait of Women in an English Village by Mary Chamberlain (Virago, 1975)
- Gaelic Without Groans by John Mackechnie (Observer Press, Stirling, Scotland, undated)
- History of the Drainage of the Great Level of the Fens Called Bedford Level, Volume 1 by Samuel A Wells, (published by the Author, by R Pheney, Law Booksellers, Fleet Street, 1830)
- Land from the Waters by Doreen Wallace (White Lion Publishers, London, 1944)
- Making Theatre by Richard Freedman and Ian Reade (Hodder and Stoughton, 1976)
- More Tales from the Fens by W H Barrett, edited by Enid Porter (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1964)
- Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651 by Laura A. M. Stewart (OUP, 2016)
- Riots, Revolutions, and the Scottish Covenanters: The Work of Alexander Henderson by Charles L Jackson (Reformation Heritage Books, 2015)
- Tales from the Fens by W H Barrett, edited by Enid Porter (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1963)
- The Drovers, Who they were and how they went an epic of the English countryside by K J Bonser, (Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1970)
- The England of Elizabeth by A L Rowse (Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1950)
- The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 by Lawrence Stone (Penguin Books, 1997)
- The Fenland Past and Present by Samuel H Miller and Sydney B J Skertchly (Leach and Son, Wisbech, 1878)
- The Fenland Story from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day by W E Dring, F.L.A. (County Library Headquarters, Huntingdon, 1975)
- The Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-88 by James Dodds (1861) - released in Kindle format in 2017 by HardPress
- The Old Ways, A Journey on Foot by Robert MacFarlane (Penguin Books, 2013)
- The Scottish Covenanter Genealogical Index - (1630-1712) by Isabelle Drown (iUniverse, Inc., 2007)
- The Scottish Tartans (W & A K Johnston Ltd, Edina Works, Edinburgh, Scotland, undated)
- The Stopping Places, a Journey Through Gypsy Britain by Damian Le Bas (Chatto & Windus, London, 2018)
- Quines, Poems in tribute to women of Scotland by Gerda Stevenson (Luath Press Ltd, Edinburgh, 2018)
- Wind Resistance by Karine Polwart (Faber & Faber, 2017)





# Project Outcomes Appendices

# Project Outcomes

## October - December 2018 Research and Development Phase

Before *Origins* began, research had started on the story *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History* by Jean Rees-Lyons, Artistic Director of The Word Garden, and connections made between The Word Garden and the University of Durham Department of Archaeology regarding their Scottish Soldiers project 2013–2018. Their work had involved the excavation and analysis of skeletons discovered in Durham Cathedral which were subsequently identified as Scottish soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar in 1650 who had been held prisoner there during the English Civil War in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Plans for *Origins* involved further research into the journey of the Scottish soldiers, who survived prison in Durham, as prisoners-of-war to the Fens with the purpose to build the New Bedford River as part of a significant drainage development in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When the *Origins* project began, there had been interest shown by the University of Durham seeing the continued journey of survivors from Durham to other parts of the UK and beyond. The Archaeology team was interested in *Origins* as an opportunity for public engagement work, which would widen their story and continue it across the UK. The Word Garden research was carried out by Peter Daldorph and Jean Rees-Lyons to discover evidence of prisoners-of-war in the communities of the Fens.



Jean Rees-Lyons' research had started several years previously as part of a personal research project. This had developed and formed the basis of the application to the NLHF for the *Origins* project to further research and communicate hidden history in the area related to the Scottish soldiers and through authenticated creative writing to bring alive the perspective of the human interest story of displacement and migration. During the project, the research deepened and a story emerged chronicling a journey by a fictional character Coventina, a young Scots woman from Dunure, who was searching for her Scottish soldier following their journey from Scotland through England to the Fens. Peter Daldorph explored National Archives, Cambridgeshire Archives, reviewed published material and held discussions with the Ely Group and Middle Level Commissioners and Environment Agency.



Further research and exploration led to the focus on the official records of the Bedford Level Corporation held at Cambridgeshire Archives, in particular the regular recording of the process of the drainage work as reported by the Adventurers in Minute Books from 1652-1653, including daily practice, events and decisions made, financial recording and mentions of the wider political context in England and Scotland at that time.

In order to process the information in its primary source form, Peter provided a transcript of the Minute Books, much of which had not been disseminated before. This primary source material was then used to create a play called *The Scottish Soldiers*. The four characters in the play were an Adventurer investor, an overseer, a Scottish soldier prisoner-of-war and a local Fenman commoner, whose living came from the land which was soon to be drained.

Jean carried out desk research, visits to Cambridgeshire Archives, Littleport Society Archives, local history societies, local and Scottish museums and organisations and with families in the area. This fed into an intuitive form of working to create work as historically accurate as possible in terms of legacy-making. The process

started with story writing and led to transferring the story, with characterisation, timeline and location into a film script as well as directing the final film later in the project. In November, drone photographer Paolo Forlin from University of Durham visited the area and with both writers and photographer Helena g Anderson, explored the Wash and took drone footage which would later form part of the project and final film.

Other support given during this research phase came from Elizabeth Stazicker, former County Archivist and chair of Cambridgeshire ACRE, who provided guidance on The Jonas Moore's Mapp and general information about the communities of Mepal and Manea, also Mike Petty, former Local History County Librarian and local historian for the Cambridgeshire area who provided insight into community life, traditions, mores, and conflicts at the time during the construction work on the river. Welney Wetland Centre became involved as a venue for a final event and also as a source of information about the environmental impact of the Wash both in the past and the present day.



As research progressed, local history groups were contacted and an Information Day was planned to link with existing collections and local expertise. At this stage, early plans were made to recruit possible actors and to hold auditions and rehearsals as the creative writing continued. Research was also concurrently running to identify costumes and research the living conditions of people during the period of 1650s living in the Fenland area.

Through the work by the University of Durham researching into the Battle of Dunbar and through local history contacts in the Cambridgeshire area more understanding developed into the significance of the drainage work and the wider context of the Civil War and Oliver Cromwell's role in the Fens and the focus of the project was given a wider significance within the history of Britain and based on scientific investigation and results. By revisiting the primary source in Cambridgeshire Archives, Peter Daldorph has provided access to new information about the building of the drainage and the lives of the Scottish soldiers which has not been explored in such detail before and has also created a transcript which provides greater access to the contents of the Minute Books of the Company of Adventurers.

*This area is only now starting to be understood for its significance by a wider audience outside of the area, for its environmental importance, for its history and also as an international feat of engineering*  
– Elizabeth Stazicker, Chair of Cambridgeshire Acre

### **January - March 2019 Collecting and Creating**

Research and writing for the play and story continued into the New Year with site visits and recording of sounds of the landscape to add further to the cross-disciplinary approach to exploring the period and the environment. The team worked towards setting up an Information Day in order to promote the project and also ask for information from experts in groups and organisations to support the work of the project and ensure accuracy. The Information Day took place at Littleport Society Archive on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and was attended by representatives from various local history groups including The Cromwell Museum, Fen Edge Trail, Ely Museum, Visit Ely, March Museum, and Cambridgeshire Archives. At this meeting great encouragement was given to the project, providing credibility to the content and helping the process of using the archive for creative interpretation.

A good relationship between Littleport Society and The Word Garden existed before this project and helped to support the group and this event. There were discussions and debate about the subject and recognition that this subject, the human side of the drainage works and the local community's response to it that had not been fully explored before. The background knowledge of professional curators and local historians at the

event also validated the fact that this human story reflected an important point in the wider political, social and economic history of Britain.

The event also showed the link with the University of Durham's Scottish Soldiers project and participants identified an interest in researching Scottish ancestors in the Fens connected to the soldiers who might have settled in the area, recognising that soldiers had died at work on the river which raised questions about previous skeletal discoveries and archaeological work along the river. There was interest in how the project can raise awareness nationally and regionally about the importance of the Fens.

*This is a microcosm of this important war period for Britain it is not made much of as it should be - this gives insight into the Civil War period very close to home*

– Attendee from WWT two-day celebration

Cambridge Filmworks were commissioned to work with Jean Rees-Lyons to adapt a film script from the fully-referenced story created with film-maker Adam Giles, to film on the Wash, edit and produce a complete film entitled *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History*. Work began in February with days in the landscape rehearsing and filming with actors Abby Cornwell (Coventina) and Duncan Hedley-Rees (Tam). The actors were volunteers, costumes and props were sourced and commissioned. The team planned a Community Open Day at Ely City Church. This was the first public event for the project – groups from the Information Day, individuals who had become involved in the project and the wider public were invited through press articles, print and online marketing to learn about what had been found out so far and hear more about the final events planned for later in the summer. Volunteer actors were also being sought to perform the play and rehearsal spaces were being researched.



The Community Open Day took place at Ely City Church on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 as a drop-in event which was attended by 51 people. Two people brought with them their own collections of rare books and family history work relating to the drainage of the Fens and their Scottish roots. From collecting postcodes we were able to see that many people came from the wider Cambridgeshire area, Central and South Cambridgeshire as well as Ely and North Cambridgeshire. An interest in the Fens had brought people with a wide interest, promoted the project further and engaged people from other parts of the county in the story about the Fenland area. Interest in the project was high and there was a buzz about the work already done. Talks were given by Jean Rees-Lyons, Peter Daldorph and Mike Petty, local historian.

The project grew organically and was responsive to the reactions of people as the work was being created. This helped not only to build momentum towards a final celebration but also provided opportunities for others to contribute to the project and help shape the final event. Comments were collected to record how people were responding to the research and the plan for a film and creative interpretation.

*This is a hidden part of people's past.*

*An excellent and fascinating project.*

*Fascinating and little known tale of slavery.*

*Extremely interesting - I will follow up thank you.*

*There is no physical recognition anywhere of the contribution to this engineering by Scottish soldiers – or known links to their ancestors.*

– Comments from attendees of the Community Open Day

Following publicity about the project, more items were loaned to the project and shown for The Word Garden

to record. Other links were made with members of the committee for Fens for the Future and Cambridgeshire Family History Society.

### April - June 2019 Sharing and Celebrating

As the project gathered momentum, work continued behind the scenes with rehearsals, filming and shaping of a soundscape. At the same time, public promotion of the project was planned for the final events in June.

The team took up an opportunity to further promote the project at Ely Library's Local History Fair on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019. By this time in the project, firm arrangements had been made to include presentations and workshops by staff from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Durham in the final event days to show the interdisciplinary approach to the story blending science discovery, social history, archaeology, archive and art to a wider audience and enable a full programme of exploration for each day. During the library event, connections were made with other local history groups, Stretham Pumping Station, Prickwillow Drainage Museum and Ely Museum as well as once again with Cambridgeshire Family History Society. A local children's writer and chaplain from HMP Whitemoor were interested in the story about prisoners in the Fenland area and the dramatisation of true stories.



Planning with local schools took place during this period in Manea and Mepal to deliver workshops during Summer Term in line with curriculum teaching. A visit to Ely Museum for a workshop took place on 29<sup>th</sup> April, workshops were delivered with Mepal and Witcham Primary School Year 4s on 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> June, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> June at Manea Primary School with Year 3s. The preparation with their headteacher and teachers helped shape the formats carried out by Jean Rees-Lyons and John Lyons.



Rehearsals and filming took place on the Wash close to the Suspension Bridge, Welney, directed by Jean Rees-Lyons and actors Duncan Rees-Lyons and Abby Cornwell. The experience of taking part in the project and giving time to recreate the story of Tam and Coventina was recorded.

*This was a fascinating experience; I have performed before but not being filmed and not outside. This was so interesting about the character and the costume and the story being based on real lives and real events.*

– Abby Cornwell, the actress playing Coventina

At Mepal and Witcham Primary School, the pupils heard the history behind the making of the Bedford River, the drainage system and what it was for. As a community close to the river, there was great interest in finding out more and imagining life in the area during 1650. Having a poet and writer work with the children to produce poetry and artwork based on the wildlife of the local vicinity blended creativity with history and science. At Manea Primary School, the interest was in how life might have been for children in 1650, what the local area looked like, how people lived and how children played. This understanding was then linked to creative writing and the school followed up by creating a diary - a Day in the Life in 1650. Again there was a cross-curricular blend of role play, history, creative writing and art.

*The pupils have a greater understanding of their local landscape, why the water is where it is, the stories about people who have changed their local area and that history can be investigated where you live.*

*The children enjoyed working with a poet and they saw themselves as poets by the end of the sessions. Links to the history of the area will [now] be put into the school curriculum to support the teaching of local history.*

– Louise Lomax, Headteacher, Mepal and Witcham Primary School

### Celebration Days 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The programme for the celebration days were planned to form a study day with the background to the Durham work leading into the creative work of The Word Garden. Each day followed the same programme and started with short lectures by senior archaeologist Richard Annis and senior lecturer Dr Pam Graves from the University of Durham project, followed by workshops by Dr Anwen Caffell, Honorary Research Fellow in Bioarchaeology and Dr Andrew Millard, Senior Lecturer.



This led into a talk by environmental consultant, Peter Daldorph, and his study of the Adventurers' Minute Books. After lunch, a guided walk across the river to the Long Hide at Welney Wetland Centre included seeing and passing over the river where the play was performed adjacent to the river, followed by the screening of the film *From Dunure to Denver*. The event was ended by a Q & A session with the University of Durham team, Elizabeth Stazicker, Mike Petty, Adam Giles and Peter Daldorph, chaired by Jean Rees-Lyons.

The celebration events were designed with The Word Garden methodology to bring together different disciplines around the topic of the Scottish soldiers and prisoners-of-war to create a greater interest and increased awareness of the value of local legacy-making activities in and for the community. Science, archaeology, social history, archives, creative writing, film-making and photography were brought together and this resulted in a synergy – a greater understanding larger than the individual parts. People taking part in the evaluation of the final events, showed that their understanding of the area had increased about the origins of the local area, the significant engineering feat of the Bedford Level drain, the prisoners-of-war who created it and the backdrop of the local area involved in national events in British history. The University of Durham provided a wider context for finding out about the Scottish soldiers in the Fens and validated The Word Garden exploration of the area.

*This is a chance for public engagement for our work and also to make further links in the UK with the wider story of the prisoners-of-war, the English Civil War in other parts of the country and follows our story to America.*

– Professor Chris Gerrard, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham

The final event included stalls by Fen Edge Trail, Denny Abbey and Farmland Museum with displays created by local schools taking part in the project. Through the feedback from attendees it was possible to see that audiences were made up of representatives from local history groups, families and friends of the actors and project team, representatives from the schools, local people with an interest in local history, local families and supporters of The Word Garden. Babylon Arts working with staff at Welney Wetland Centre ensured the organisation of the day. The event was free but ticketed and organised through Eventbrite by Babylon Arts. Both days were fully booked and the total attendance was 132 people across both days.



*Very humbling to understand more about our local land and the men who were involved in building it.  
I am so grateful and impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the experts here today.  
A very interesting day which has raised my awareness of the history of the Fens and origins of this area.  
Good mix of science and 'humanising' history.*

*-Selection of comments by attendees at the Celebration Days*

Audience evaluation showed the impact of creative interpretation – people had been given an insight into the period, this human interest story from different perspectives and all of the disciplines presented the prisoners-of-war as individuals with lives and unique experiences.

*An evocative and emotional experience. A very entertaining and interesting day - thoroughly immersive.*

Feedback showed a demand to share this history more widely, especially to young people. Many saw this project as a beginning with great potential for further repeats and opportunities to reach more people in the local area.

*The play was very effective and could be adapted to be performed in local schools to give local children an appreciation of their surroundings.*

*Very inspiring day which has encouraged me to do further reading and research.*

Audiences sampled stated that creative interpretation of archive and historic research had been extremely effective. Volunteer actors had found that their knowledge of the area had been increased and their acting experience widened to include monologues and direct address. Volunteers at the Welney Wetland Centre were also interested in the topics covered and are able to add their knowledge about the work of the Adventurers and the Scottish soldiers as prisoners-of-war working to build the Hundred Foot River to creating future visitor experiences at the centre.

### **Beyond The Project**

*Origins* has had many impacts beyond the research findings and creative input carried out. There have been requests for repeat showings of the film and performances and this has led to an extension of the project to a two week long exhibition and series of workshops in central Ely at Babylon ARTS over two weeks in October 2019. A film of the play is also being made for local and wider dissemination.

The transcription of the Proceedings of the Adventurers is a new resource which is available in the public domain for use at Cambridgeshire Archives. The story in publication and film both entitled *From Dunure to Denver, Coventina's Quest into Hidden History* are now published as a fully referenced story showing the authenticated route south of the Scottish soldiers to Fenland. The film, story, transcript and film of the play are examples of heritage learning in practice and are resources accessed at [www.thewordgarden.org.uk/projects](http://www.thewordgarden.org.uk/projects)

Welney Wetland Centre has a significant project, Project Godwit, a partnership between RSPB and Wildlife Wetland Trust to headstart breeding of rare black-tailed godwits. The project team have named 15 godwits with names associated with the *Origins* project and Scottish soldiers' family names. They were released from Welney on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Their progress will be monitored and their return to the Ouse Washes recorded in the future. [www.projectgodwit.org.uk/scottish-soldiers](http://www.projectgodwit.org.uk/scottish-soldiers)

The project has impacted on people directly involved and audiences who came to the sharing days. Evaluation evidence gathered shows greater understanding of the significance of the Hundred Foot River or New Bedford River in Britain's history during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, greater understanding of the human achievement of the landscape engineering work, the environmental impact of the drainage work and the science behind it, learning about remains and the human life they represent. These outcomes for people will continue beyond the project and additional planned events, online resources and the *Origins* publication will seek to widen its reach further and stimulate further interest in the topic, both locally and nationally.

## Appendices

## Order of Service

Extract from the original Order of Service for the re-interment of the Remains of Scottish Soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar, 1650, which is covered by the Christian Copyright Licensing Scheme under Licence No. 68670.

## **Background information as per order of service**

"In 2013, a mass grave was discovered in Durham City, during building works for a new café at the University's Palace Green Library, and the remains of up to 28 individuals were excavated from the site. Following the excavation, archaeologists from the University's Department of Archaeology undertook extensive analysis which concluded that the remains were those belonging to soldiers from the battle of Dunbar 1650 who had been force-marched to Durham after the battle, and imprisoned in the then empty and disused Cathedral. This discovery solved the near 400 year old mystery of where those who died were buried.

"This reburial service marks the culmination of five years of research and engagement, during which the University, in collaboration with Durham Cathedral, have sought to show the remains dignity and respect. This service has been designed to provide these men with the fitting burial they were denied when they died. Durham Cathedral, in consultation with representatives from the Church of Scotland and Scottish Episcopal Church, have created a service which reflects the tradition of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and which acknowledges that not all of the men may have been Scottish, and so may have come from different religious backgrounds. As such, this will be an ecumenical service, with readings, metrical psalms and prayers. Scottish soil has also been brought from East Lothian, near to the battle of the site, to cover the grave. In due course the grave will be marked with a permanent memorial.

"Through this service, we hope to close this chapter for these men and give them dignity and peace, whilst not forgetting the tragic circumstances of their death here in Durham."

Professor David Cowling  
Scottish Soldiers Archaeology Project Lead  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Arts & Humanities, Durham  
University

Canon Rosalind Brown  
Canon Librarian, Durham Cathedral

Canon David Kennedy  
Vice-Dean and Canon Precentor,  
Durham Cathedral

**Hymn**      *To the Lord will I now cry*

**Psalm**

I to the Lord will I now cry,  
 Ease a burden off mine soul and!  
 My safety comes from the Lord,  
 Who rescues me with both hands.

The Lord has laid his hand upon me,  
 He overcame that these kings  
 before he that kingship had,  
 He overcame that these kings.

The Lord does keep, the Lord thy shade  
 From thy going from death-side.  
 The merciful shepherd shall not leave  
 Nor give thee up for dead.

The Lord shall keep thy soul; he shall  
 Preserve thee from all ill,  
 Above thy going and thy coming,  
 God keep thee ever and well.

### **Introduction led by Canon Rosalind Brown**

"We have come together to reinter in consecrated ground the remains of members of the Scottish Army who were taken prisoner following the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. Having been force-marched from Dunbar to Durham, they were imprisoned in the disused and desecrated Cathedral during the winter of 1650-51. Following building works on Palace Green in 2013, these remains were uncovered in a mass grave. Following extensive analysis by archaeologists from the department of Archaeology in Durham University, their identity was confirmed. It is very possible that many of their comrades remain buried under Palace Green Library.

"In the religious ferment of the mid-seventeenth century, it is impossible to know with what ceremony and with what dignity, if any, these prisoners were first buried. The *Directory for the Public Worship of God* of 1645, which replaced the outlawed *Book of Common Prayer*, made no provision for any ceremony or prayer to accompany the act of burial. As prisoners they may not have been accorded much respect or reverence. While those prisoners who were Scottish would have been baptised and formed in the traditions of the reformed Church of Scotland, it is possible that others fighting for Scotland from continental Europe may have been raised in other traditions of faith.

"In a spirit of ecumenism, and in the light of the rites and ceremonies of the contemporary Church of Scotland, today in this Christian cemetery, we accord them the dignity and respect to which they are due, commanding them to the mercy and grace of God, in the faith of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, and in the hope to which we are called."



**Durham**  
University



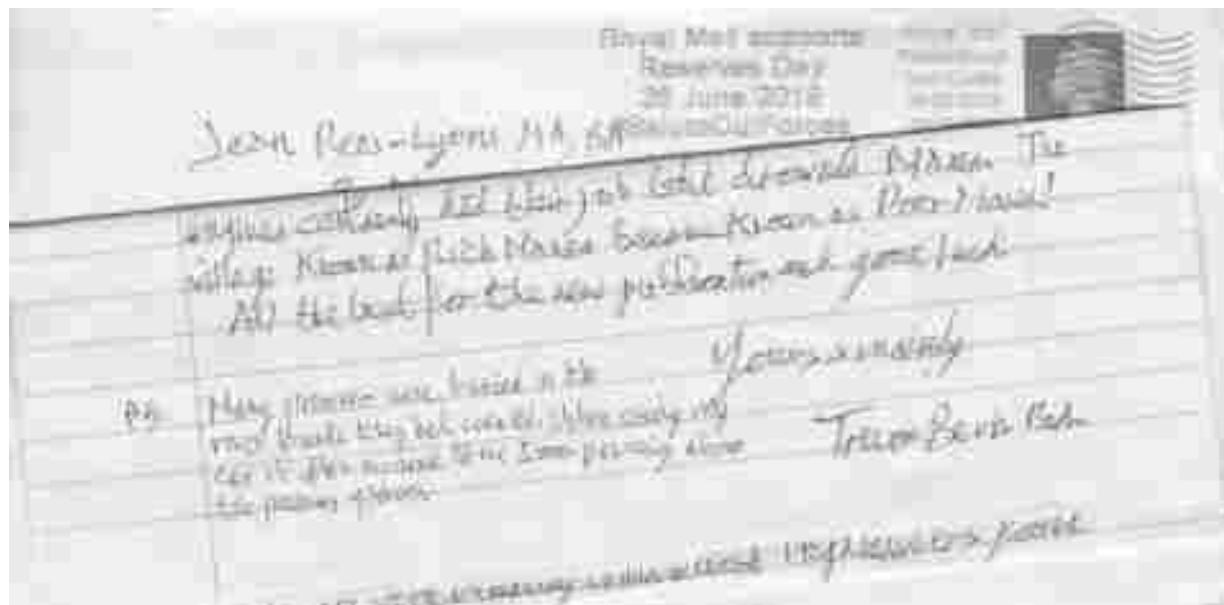
**DURHAM**  
**CATHEDRAL**  
THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

**The Re-interment of the Remains of  
Scottish Soldiers from the  
Battle of Dunbar, 1650**

*Elliott Hill Road Cemetery,  
Durham*

*Friday 10 May 2013  
11.15 a.m.*

## Primary Source - Letter from Trevor Bevis



22nd June 2019

Dear Jean Rees-Lyons,

Thank you for your letter re: forthcoming publication concerning Scottish prisoners-of-war employed on the drainage of the Fens.

I apologise for my hand-writing. I can no longer operate a keyboard and computer through the onslaught of old-age!

I am very interested in your delving into Fenland history and its relevance to Scottish prisoners-of-war. Many were captured at Dunbar and others at a great battle near Worcester. They ended up in the Fens, then with its very unhealthy climate which Highlanders found very distressing.

I give you full permission to quote from 'Prisoners of the Fens'. I am aware of the cost of printing but would appreciate a copy of your work, and am willing to pay for it.

The drainage of the Fens is something we all benefit from in our times. The Hundred Foot River had a great number of wind engines, wrongly called wind mills. These were solely used for passing water from one to another, whereas in Holland they could also be used for grinding corn. The Fen engines certainly did their job but drowned Manea. The village known as Rich Manea became known as Poor Manea!

All the best for the new publication and good luck.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Bevis BA

P.S. Many prisoners were buried in the river banks they had created. When using my car it often occurred to me I was passing above the prisoners graves.

(Transcript from original, page 133)

2nd June 2011

Dear Maurice-Lyon

Thank you for your letter re forthcoming publication concerning Social practice of war employed in the history of the firm.

I apologize for my belated reply. I am no longer connected to my old computer. George Blaikie has kindly obtained

I am very interested in your history of the English hotel and the associated Scottish practitioners. Most interesting at present are those at a hotel built near Wimborne. The owner is the King, the one so vigorously condemned by Macaulay and others following

I give you full permission to quote from your book. I do not mind the cost of printing but would expect a copy of your work and am willing to pay for it.

The struggle of the Earl Scudamore with Captain Hargrave is indeed typical of a good number of civil disputes, mostly settled with legal trials, which were frequently quite protracted. In Scotland this was also true for many years. The King, however, did not get off so well there. The Duke of Rothesay had made his own personal arrangements

All the best for the new publication and get back

FAG

Many thanks for sending me *Journal of Early  
Modern Civil and Ecclesiastical History*.  
It is a wonderful collection of new  
approaches.

# Project Godwit



In honour of the Scottish Soldiers who, as *brothers of war*, worked in the Fens in the 17th century.  
These back-to-back portraits have been named:

These birds were measured on 17 June 2013 at WWT Wherry.

The table below lists the birds showing their name, ring combination, hatch date, nest location, release location and release date. The ring combination indicates the colour of the rings worn on the left and right legs; the first two colours are on the left leg, and the second two on the right leg. The last ring is lime in colour and engraved with a letter E – all birds rings under the Project Godal scheme receive this Little E ring.

Name	Colour rings*		Hatch date	Nest location	Release location	Release date
Coventina		N	16 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Boston	L	N	16 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Criallen	T	N	17 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Ehvæt	Y	N	17 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Doom	G	O	17 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Thistle	R	N	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Units		N	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Heather	O	N	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Cuthbert		O	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Mitchell		O	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Newton		S	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Hume		O	18 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Tom	D	S	19 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Wadey		O	19 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19
Chimney	Y	O	20 May 19	Nene Washes	WWT Welney	17 Jun 19

“我真希望你能够了解我的内心世界。”

The names have been chosen in consultation with The Word Garden to represent the story of the soldiers based on:

- The family names of soldiers listed in the Adventurers' Minute Books (Cristen, Cuthbert, Mitchell, Hawston, Hume, Worley and Clinton)
  - Related places/events (Door, after Odon Hill in the Battle of Durbar; Elvet, after Elvet Hill where some of the soldiers were left to rest; Boston, after the US-city which was the destination for soldiers deported on the ship Unity)
  - Fictional characters in a story produced as part of the Origins project (Tees and Coventina)
  - Symbols of Scotland (Thistle and Heather)

This name will be permanently documented in the time records. More information can be found at [www.oit.psu.edu/policy/time.html](http://www.oit.psu.edu/policy/time.html).

Thank you to Jean Ries-Lyon, Artistic Director of The Wind Gallerie, for helping us identify these names.





In memory of the  
**Sepulchral Soldiers**

who on instructions of their masters in life  
came  
in the 1700's  
upon continents (mostly South America)  
died

These birds have been released on part of  
Project Seabird's re-introduction site.  
Historical grounds in the Falklands

Burton \*\*\*  
Cotterer \*\*  
Constance \*\*\*  
Cuthill \*\*\*  
Gullion \*\*\*  
Lyon \*\*\*  
Senni \*\*\*  
Hedding \*\*\*  
Haworth \*\*\*  
Hume \*\*\*  
Murchell \*\*\*  
Tate \*\*\*  
Thorn \*\*\*  
Unity \*\*\*  
Walter \*\*\*

The names have been chosen in collaboration  
with The RSPB (Paras), and will be  
presented (unveiled) in the 1800's  
(century)

Released 0900, 17 June 2010  
Gullion Island, Ladd-Ford or Unity Islands  
Research Centre



*Fen Islands  
Before the  
Drains Came*





"P.S. Many prisoners are buried in the river banks they had created.  
When using my car it often occurred to me I was passing above  
the prisoners' graves."

Trevor Bevis, 22 June 2019

